THE OVER-SEAS LIBRARY

AMONG THE MAN-EATERS

JOHN GAGGIN



Where are the "Ends of the Empire"? and which are the Over-Seas? At "the Ends" of one may arise the beginnings of other Empires to come. It is notorious that wherever an English-speaking community settles and opens up new lands, it speedily speaks for itself as a Centre; and so rapid is the growth of the great Colonies, that Ministers to-day writing despatches to Dependencies over-seas, receive their answers from nations to-morrow.

But great as is the growth of the Empire and the enterprise of its peoples, the new native-born literatures take years to germinate and generations to arrive. Thence comes it that often we do not understand the atmospheres of the new English-speaking peoples, and often misunderstand the problems, the ambitions, the attitudes, befitting them as new races. And while the British Empire grows richer daily in patriotic fervours, in speeches, in splendour, in cant, and in the oracular assurances of Statesmen, the English people seeks to understand its cousins by the interchange of cablegrams, by debates, and by all the ambiguities of official memoranda.

It is, however, the artist's work to bring the people of his nation and their atmosphere before the eyes of another. It is the artist alone, great or small, who, by revealing and interpreting the life around him, makes it living to the rest of the world. And the artist is generally absent! In the case of the English in India, ten years ago, while the literature of information was plentiful, the artist was absent; Mr. Kipling arrived and discovered modern India to



the English imagination. And to-day, in the midst of a general movement for Empire expansion, with talk of Federation, Jingoism, and with the doing of real work, the artists in literature are generally absent, the artists who should reveal the tendencies, the hidden strength and weakness, the capacities of the new communities.

The aim of "The Over-Seas Library" is purely experimental. It proposes to print literature from any quarter that deals with the actual life of the English outside England, whether of Colonial life or the life of English emigrants, travellers, traders, officers, over-seas, among foreign and native races, black or white. Pictures of life in the American States will not necessarily be excluded.

"The Over-Seas Library" makes no pretence at Imperial drum-beating, or putting English before Colonial opinion. It aims, instead, at getting the atmosphere and outlook of the new peoples recorded, if such is possible. It aims at being an Interchange between all parts of the Empire without favour, an Interchange of records of the life of the English-speaking peoples, and of the Englishmen beyond seas, however imperfect, fragmentary and modest such records or accounts may be.

The Editor will be glad to receive any MSS. addressed to him, c/o the Publisher.

E. G.

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AMONG THE MAN-EATERS





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JOHN GAGGIN

AMONG THE MAN-EATERS



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1900

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TO

J. A. BOYD,

LD CHUM AND COMRADE,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

BY HIS OLD FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

"Facing it yet, oh! my friend, stouthearted,
What does it matter for rain or shine,
For hopes deferred, or gain departed?
Nothing could conquer that heart of thine.

And thy health and strength are beyond confessing
As the only joys that are worth possessing.
May the days to come be as rich in blessing
As the days we spent in the 'Auld Lang Syne.'"

A. B. Paterson.

"We've shared our peril, we've shared our sport,
Our sunshine and gloomy weather,
Feasted and flirted, and fenced and fought,
Struggled and toiled together:

In happier moments lighter of heart,
Stouter of heart in sorrow:
We've met, and we've parted, and now we part
For ever—perchance—to-morrow."

A. L. Gordon.

PREFACE

I SUPPOSE every one who publishes a book is expected to write a preface; yet I have little to say.

In '71, with hundreds of others, I arrived in Fiji, and went cotton planting as well as the rest—and lost also, as they did. Yet the Gordon Lands Commission took no land from me personally—for I had purchased none. After the annexation I was offered by the British Colonial Authorities a situation as Government Agent, and as an official visited many times, during some six years or so, the New Hebrides and Solomon groups, in the Western Pacific. Most of what I have written has come, at one time or other, under my own observation, and it is correct. Of course names, dates, and localities are altered for

obvious reasons—as for the rest, 'tis true. Let me paraphrase our "Australian Gordon":

> "You may take my tales with a little salt,
> But they need none, nevertheless."

After leaving the islands I went to North Queensland for some years, and, during a holiday, shot for some four or five months through Java.

The author takes occasion here to thank the proprietors of *Chambers's Journal*, *The Age*, *The Argus*, and *The Leader*, Melbourne, for their kind permission to republish in book form some of the subject-matter now included in the following pages.

This attempt at book-making is a first effort, and my hand is more accustomed to other weapons than the "mighty pen." May I therefore crave the indulgence of "my lords the critics," and the reading public?

JOHN GAGGIN.

OLD-TIME LEVUKA

"We've painted the Islands vermilion,
We've pearled on half shares in the Bay,
We've shouted on seven-ounce nuggets,
We've starved on a Kanaka's pay.
We laughed at the world as we found it,
Its women, and cities, and men,
From Sayyid Burgash in a tantrum
To the smoke-reddened eyes of Loben."

RUDYARD KIPLING.

AT the end of the sixties, and early seventies, this Fijian capital was one of the queerest and oddest places I had ever seen.

Picture in your mind's eye a row of houses, mostly of wood and zinc-roofed, facing the waveless lagoon waters of a lovely bay, and not twenty paces back from high-water mark.

Scarce a hundred yards behind rose high and steep hills, clothed to their summits in the evergreen and luxuriant foliage of the South Seas. In these mountain valleys inland lived a tribe of wild and brave mountaineers, who had dared to make war on Bau, and one of whom, some little time before, had shot at Thackombau himself in the very middle of the town.

The row of houses extended along the beach for some three-quarters of a mile or so, divided about equally by a rushing, noisy little stream. Around all, and ever ringing in our ears, was the boom of the great Pacific, dashing itself on the steep face of the outer reef, that girt the harbour nearly round, scarce two miles away. Fancy this bay crowded with boats and small craft, from the thirty-tonner downwards—the mosquito fleet, as we called it—while anchored out in the deeper waters lay the men-of-war of one or more nations, our British flag conspicuous among them. Then try to imagine old-time Levuka, if you can.

What a cosmopolitan place it was—the Paris

of the vast South Seas, the centre of all the trade of the Western Islands, a free port, no taxes to pay, no duties levied: here on the crowded beach one might meet people from every island in the broad Pacific. The tall black Tanna man, unclothed to the waist, his mop-like hair hanging to the shoulders, and bound in little tufts with threads of cocoanut fibre, his ears full of tortoiseshell and mother-of-pearl ornaments, jingling as he strode—Tower musket in hand generally. Behind comes the soap-coloured Line Islander, or Tukalau, his long black hair like a horse's tail, hanging nearly to the ground, with hand on his shark-tooth knife. Next comes the stately Fijian chief, with his tribesmen at his back, each with club or Tower musket on shoulder. Thackombau himself, or Tui Levuka perhaps, girt round with folds of brown *tapa* marked with circular black spots, which none but chiefs may wear, and the manly, chiefly greeting, "*Sai andra papalangi*" ("Good morning, white man"), generally "*turanga*" (chief) added: perchance his comely, tall, and graceful daughter behind

him, clothed in a *sulu*, flower scented cocoa-nut oil, and a cigarette, the lithe active figure, glinting like brown satin in the bright sunlight, crowned on brow and bosom with garlands of sweet-smelling *oleti* flowers, the hair and ears decorated with the scarlet hibiscus, three or four braids of hair hanging by one little ear in sign of her maidenhood.

Then one hears, perhaps, the musical "*Alofa*" (love to you) from the tall, powerful, graceful Samoan, the saddle-coloured Apollo of the Pacific. Through all these stalks the white—revolver on hip, generally half a dozen armed Tanna men or Solomon men at his heels, and "*Toro, Toro*" ("Make way, there"), on his lips.

Some five thousand of us, all suffering from cotton fever, had just invaded sleepy, cannibal and Wesleyan Fiji, and fairly astonished its coffee-coloured people and its few whites. Over and above all, and controlling all, in their numbers and determination towered the Anglo-Saxons, young fellows from all the colonies, and the old land—younger sons of the great squat-

ting families—well-known names among the wool-kings, miners from every diggings—were among us. There was no government of any sort, no law either, every one did what he thought right in his own eyes; nothing can describe us better than a verse of Kipling's "Et Dona Fermtes:—

"I have watched them in their tantrums, all that pentecostal crew,
French, Italian, Arab, Spaniard, Pruss and Yank, and Dutch and Jew,
Celt, and savage, buff and ochre, cream and yellow, mauve and white,
But it never really mattered till the English grew polite!"

In after years it suited some of our rulers to describe us as a set of scamps—the scum of the colonies. This was simply untrue; a few there were, discredited and broken men—and where are they not?—well, they were in a small minority, and were known. For years before annexation Levuka was more free from serious crime than any town I have known—crime *per se* was unknown among us. True, sometimes

we painted the town a little red perhaps—practical joking of a rough sort, and escapades born of geneva, and duelling, were about all we were guilty of; most of us habitually carried arms, and it was extraordinary how this habit tended to general politeness all round. How rough of speech we are to-day, in comparison with our polite forefathers, who ever carried swords at their sides!

Our British consul was a character, an old naval officer, with the prestige of the British name at his back, and his unique skill with his saw-handled duelling pistols—for he could at ten paces, with weapon in either hand, shoot out the spots on a deuce of spades every time. I never saw or heard of any one else who could do this.

The story is told yet of him, that one evening the powerful Fijian Livoni chief dared him to come to his (the chief's) town in the valley over the mountains behind Levuka. At daylight next morning the intrepid consul, with a few jack-tars at his back, struck the reed sides of the house of the lordly Fijian chief, in the

centre of Ovalau, and ordered him out, and took him prisoner, in the middle of his own village.

The consul was one of the three whites who first walked through Viti Levu from sea to sea, among hosts of fierce cannibals, most of whom had never seen a white before.

Now the consul kept an old-fashioned "stocks," and whenever we were very "bold boys" he popped our ringleaders in them, and the very funniest thing I ever saw was a planter in the "stocks" in the middle of the beach-street, one of his labour boys holding an umbrella over him to keep off the sun, and another holding a newspaper in front for him to read. When the poor prisoner "pledged his honour" to behave himself he was let go, and I don't remember a case in which any one of the fellows broke his given word in this connection.

Occasionally a popular man got in the stocks, and then some night, after a champagne supper, forty or fifty kindred spirits would turn out in the small hours, carry the stocks to the end of the jetty, and with a mighty shout hurl it into the sea, there to remain until the consul

gave Tui Levuka, the native chief of the town, a case of gin to fish it out again.

Our Sea Island cotton was from 4s. to 5s. the pound, and when one got a fiver for a bag of it most of us had more money than sense.

A white woman was a rarity, to be protected as she walked the beach from the rush of the stalwart brown men to look upon her face.

When a creditor met a debtor, this sometimes happened: "I say, Brown, you have sold your cotton, pay me that tenner I have your I.O.U. for." To him Jones, "Go to Hades; I gave you too much for your boat as it was; she was half rotten, I'll give no more." "Well, Jones, I'll take it out of your hide, or know the reason why." Then hands would go to weapons, and we, the bystanders, would rush in, disarm both angry men, and walk them off to the Rotunda, where our boat-boys generally camped behind M——n's. Mats and rugs were kicked away, and the two would be put in to settle it English fashion. After a few rounds one or other would have had enough, and the vanquished would agree to pay the amount perhaps,

or forego it, as the case might be, one or two of the onlookers would be asked to register the verdict in their pocket-books, and I only remember one fellow venturing to dispute the "jurisdiction of the court"—we tarred and feathered him, I think, and I never heard of any more appeals to a higher tribunal.

This sort of thing, however, could not continue very long, and after a while a sort of Government was formed, under "Cakobau Rex" (this is the Fijian way of spelling Thackombau), the high chief of Bau, the most powerful man in the group: the whole thing was a sort of travesty of the British constitution. The planters sent members to both Houses, parliament met, ministers were appointed, customs established, a small force of Fijian armed constabulary, and Courts got up, &c., &c., and everything went well for a year or two; all the fellows in town used to attend the debates. The best, most successful, and shortest speech I ever heard was made by a stuttering member. Here it is: "Mr. Speaker, the h-honourable m-m-m-ember for

the Rewa is, I hear, a man of p-p-prayer," and the speaker had to sit down, the thunders of applause became so violent. It was whispered the honourable (*sic*) member referred to, had, in another colony, opened *a meeting of his creditors with prayer*.

However, after some time the ministers got beaten in the House—dissolved, and went to their constituents—got defeated again in the new House, and, refusing to resign, seized power, got the so-called king, Thackombau, who cared for none of these things so long as his privy purse was kept up, to prorogue the Houses again, and again, and yet again. Had we been other than we were, then there would have been bloody work; but true to our English blood, training, and traditions, just did what our forbears had done under the first Charles—we one and all refused to pay the taxes.

Now each one of us coming to the group brought silver in quantity, but as fast as we spent it the merchants sent it away to buy more goods; we had no bank, so there was a chronic shortness of silver on the beach. To

meet this the most prominent planters and storekeepers issued notes payable on demand for 4s., 10s., and 20s., and these, with Chilian half-dollars, became the circulating medium; but the Fijians refused to touch paper, they could not understand it. The Government of "Thackombau Rex" issued 20s. notes in the same way, and while everything went all right these circulated at par, but when ministers overrode the constitution and could not get in the taxes, their notes were refused, and not being able to pay cash on demand, their paper fell fully 50 per cent.

The Government in a fix, now issued warrants of arrest against us all for "high treason": how lawyers made out the non-payment of taxes "high treason," no one, not a lawyer, was ever able to understand.

A neighbour of mine on his own plantation one fine morning at daylight was called on by the Government taxgatherer, with thirty armed Fijians in his train, to pay the taxes on the spot, or get arrested. He refused point-blank; as the collector entered, there was luckily wait-

ing, for something or other, the little Fijian *ma-ma* lassie (the girl-child who chews the *kava* root, the beer of the natives); frightened at the strange white man, she slipped into one of the rooms, and as the planter went for his rifle he saw her; it did not take two minutes to put the little thing through the window, with a message to the local chief to surround the house with his warriors, and meantime the collector was asked to breakfast; then after this the parleying began again, revolvers in hand; in the middle of it in slipped the little girl, and while asking if she was wanted to *ma-ma* took occasion to whisper that two hundred of the "teeth of the town" (*i.e.*, the fighting men) were in the cotton surrounding the house. Then my chum ordered the collector off the premises, and gave him ten minutes to quit the plantation. On the other's refusal to go, the tribal slogan was given, and up sprang all round two hundred black-faced warriors, led by the chief himself, and the planter had to escort the astonished rate-collector and his frightened guards to their boat to save them from the

wrath of the tribe, for daring to interfere with their white man. Five hundred yams, and a pig, with two or three roots of *kava*, led to a wild revel among the charcoal-painted braves of the village, and so the matter ended.

When we planters had to go to Levuka we went from shop to shop in bodies with our armed boat-boys at our backs to avoid being arrested for "high treason," forsooth. When ten or fifteen of us marched down the beach after breakfast, or tiffin, to sell our cotton, or what not, with thirty or forty armed retainers behind, no native, drilled or not, cared to face us. But if one of us having "looked upon the wine when it was red," mooned off by himself, he was pounced on, and put in the cells, a log house of cocoanut logs. At dinner that evening in the long room at "S——t's" the matter would be talked over, perhaps some of the man's chums would propose a rescue; then about nine or ten at night, some twenty of us would slip up to the jail; the Fijian chief in charge of the guard would get a hint to go to sleep, a timid knock at the door of the janitor's

quarters would follow ; "Come in!" and in all went. The situation would be taken in at a glance. "Well, gentlemen, I know what you want ; you must use force, though. The keys are in my left-hand pocket ; but for goodness' sake, gentlemen, only take the 'high treason' man—don't let the others out." Strong arms were round the appealing official in a second, keys taken, door opened, and our comrade called up. Once a gigantic Highland planter acted as door-opener to get out another "Sandy of that ilk," when a murderer came forward out of the gloom, and said, "Let me go too ; high treason is as bad as murder. I will go out." "Stand back," growled the Highlander, "or you'll regret it." "I won't," yelled the other. The strong left arm of the great Gael shot out like a sledge-hammer. I think I see him now, for I stood beside him, and the man was lifted back into the gloom with a thud. As we returned the keys, we suggested a doctor be sent for ; the man was found insensible with a broken jaw.

When we brought up the rescued one to

"S——t's" in triumph, the affair generally wound up in a supper, and we went to bed in the small hours. On one occasion I got nearly collared myself (an unexecuted warrant for high treason yet exists, I suppose, for me); I wanted to get to a store at the other end of the beach in a hurry, and darted off by myself. I got down right enough, but coming back a white, and a dozen armed Fijians with him, called on me to surrender or pay; my tax was only a paltry fifty shillings, but I refused—on principle, of course—drew my revolver, put my back to a wall, and swore by this and that, I would allow no one to arrest me. In vain the white called on the native police to go on—they had no stomach for the job. For an hour I faced the lot, and then I saw a couple of planters with their ten or a dozen boys behind, coming down the beach, and called out, so I was rescued. The Fijians cleared at once, followed by the white official. I gave up going alone along the beach after this.

One day about this time a child of Anak from "the land of the leal" found himself in

the cells ; his chums were in town, but no rescue followed, so he interviewed the official. "Let me go for two days, I'll pledge my word to come back ; you let others do it, let me ;" but the other declined, so that night the imprisoned one put his great back against the old cocoa-nut logs, and actually lifted them out, and walked off, and after a week went back home with his neighbours.

As we went in gangs, the different groups got nicknames ; there were the *Taviuni* lords, the *Nandi* swells, the *Rewa* roughs, and so on ; these proper names being Fijian districts. About this time also a few Americans got up a secret political society called the *Klu-Klux*. The planters as a body let the society severely alone on the one side, and the parvenu Government on the other. The society established its headquarters at the Levuka north end of the town, while the Government supporters mustered at the Nasova, or south end. There was a large barn of a place known as "Key's," and one fine morning all Levuka was surprised to find it in

the hands of the *Klu-Klux*, and made into a sort of barracks, and an earthwork thrown up, and a gun or two, I believe, put in position. As an answering move the Government party fortified a building at their end, and put some small guns on a vessel, and made her into a sort of gunboat. So we non-politicals found ourselves between a certain personage and the deep sea.

To make things worse the Ba (a large Fijian river) planters rebelled, warned their Government officials off, and armed their labour boys.

A Government expedition was sent against these malcontents, armed constabulary, and Fijian levies, perhaps about a thousand or so, and a few guns. They marched inland some miles, with colours flying and drums beating. The fiery cross was sent round, and the next day the planters gathered, and, led by American army officers who had seen service in the great civil war, surrounded the Government troops, and threw up earthworks in their turn. This move was totally unexpected, and the sapient leader of the Fijians found himself in a strong position, but with no permanent

water. A day or two would settle it, yet so determined and impatient were the planters that even against the advice of the professionals, they proposed to take the government position by assault. On being put to the vote it was only lost by a minority of one. The Fijian raw levies cared not to face the planters and their drilled labour lads in the open, much less behind earthworks, so began parleying, and were finally allowed to re-embark with colours displayed and drums sounding, but leaving all their supplies and heavy guns behind. What feasting and feeding the Tanna boys had for a week! How the planters were finally got off is another story, which would require a Kipling to tell adequately.

After this the *Klu-Klux* grew and multiplied in secret, and often at night put sentries on across the beach, our only road. One night two brother planters in town proposed to me to go to a *kava*-drinking in Levuka native village; the night was bright moonlight, soft and balmy, so I agreed, and we started—to be stopped ten minutes afterwards by the *Klu-*

Klux sentry, with an Enfield as long as himself, who refused to let us pass until we gave the *Klu-Klux* countersign. In vain we told him we were planters, and had nothing to do with the fellows on the other side, let us pass he would not, so we needs had to return. Our language then became unfit for publication; however, said one, "I know that chap, he is fond of his nip, I'll get a bottle of gin, if you, G——, will seize him while he drinks, and we will go in spite of the brute." "Done, old man," I said. "I'll do the holding." So when we interviewed that sentinel again, he said, "I am not going to be bribed with gin, and you shan't pass, but I don't mind joining you fellows in a wet."

As he laid his gun against a fence and helped himself, I got behind him, and pinned his arms to his sides in a flash, my chums dashed past, and I laid the kicking sentry on his back and followed. When we got out of gunshot, we yelled, "Mr. Sentry, the *Klu-Klux* countersign is gin." Coming home in the small hours,

we hoped against hope for a fresh sentry; but no, there he was—and swearing he would shoot us; so we had nothing for it but to go through an old graveyard fenced with six-foot galvanised iron. Now *kava*, or *yangona* (it is known by both names), never intoxicates; it is not a ferment, but when taken in excess paralyses the sinews of the knee and prevents one from walking, so my chums were rather unsteady on their pins, but *kava* never affected me; so they said, "G——, give us a back, you are a long-legged fellow, and a bucket of *kava* has no effect on you." So I backed, and they got over. When I scrambled after I found they had gone on. Now a graveyard after midnight I submit is not a pleasant place. So I got to S——t's as quickly as I could, passing one of the chums on the verandah, and so to bed. At five next morning this man and self were pulled out of bed by No. 3, who, between old tombstones and *kava*, was unable to get along and had stopped in the graveyard all night. His language became unwriteable as we asked him

how many ghosts he had seen, and whether they were black or white.

To buy anything was a long job at this time. Suppose one wanted a shirt say, you inquired the price.

"Oh, eight shillings good money."

"What do you consider good?"

"Oh, Jones's, and Smith's, and Robinson's, and silver, of course, but not Brown's or Black's."

"What about Government notes?"

"Oh, fifty per cent. under face value."

And so, after a lot of work, a fellow managed to secure a shirt. Occasionally some of our fellows would have to go home to the old land —in such cases this beach money was so much rubbish. "The thing" to do under these circumstances was to give a big farewell dinner to all neighbours and comrades, at S——t's in the small hours, clear away the chairs, put the table in the corner, a chair on top, and from this coign of vantage to fling the notes in the air to be scrambled for schoolboy fashion. At one great affair of this kind that I assisted

in, as the notes fluttered from the planter's hand, I bounded in the air, football style, and secured a dozen or so of Jones's or Brown's "promises to pay on demand"—but what a trampling I got to be sure! We planters seldom or never wore boots, even in town. Bare-footed, with trousers turned up to the knee, we went everywhere, easy and free; there were so many streams to cross, and foot-gear was so hot, after a time they became irksome, and were discarded.

Hardly a week passed without a duel of some sort. Here is an account of one that did come off, and another that didn't. What caused the first I quite forget, but one evening, at dead low tide on the sands, right in front of the town, the foes met, and, of all things in the world, with old Brown Besses; the principals were put at the water's edge, some sixty yards apart, both old weapons cracked together, and one warrior fell on the sands to all appearance badly wounded, the other dashed his musket into the sea, exclaiming, "My G——, I have killed a man at last!" and we all rushed down,

to find the victim hit in the forehead with—jam —the seeds in it had brought blood, and that was all.

In the other case a new hand had landed overnight, and had just sat down to a very crowded breakfast-table next morning. Just as he had been helped he left his seat a moment, and a late bird quietly slipped into the vacant chair, and as the stranger returned, had taken up the knife and fork to begin. The latter asked for his seat again quietly; it was refused. He was a powerful fellow, so he simply lifted the other, chair and all, on to a side table, took another chair, and began his meal. The intruder looked so comical on the sideboard with knife and fork in hand that the whole table roared. A challenge was given and accepted quickly. Next morning, 5 a.m., at Wai-Tovu bathing-place, swords. For two days the guileless new chum and his second went to the rendezvous, but no one turned up—John Barleycorn the excuse. On the third day the stranger lost patience, put his shoulder to the locked door of the other's room, and swore

ne should fight or apologise. The fellow refused to do either, so he was lugged into the yard, to a dirty duck-hole there, got his choice to be thrown in or sign an apology—he signed. Is it not in the book of the chronicles of the apologies of Levuka, framed by our old genial host of yore, S——t, and kept as a souvenir of these warlike (*sic*) times?

One night came a hail at my locked bedroom door. "Get up and join us, G——, will you?" "I'll see you to Hades first; I have been up two nights already." "If you don't come, we will smash in." "I won't!" Bang went the door-lock, and I am bundled out on the floor. "Dress, or we will blanket-toss you." "No, I will not," from me in a sulk. "Very well, take him out, boys, and toss him." After five minutes tossing, "Will you dress now, G——?" "No." "Into the sea with him, then," and in I went. It was as dark as pitch, so I dived under the wharf quietly, and climbed on the cross timbers without a word. "G——, where are you?" No answer. They called for five minutes, and then one reveller suggested poor

G—— was drowned, or taken by a shark; a rush for lights and grappling-irons followed, while I paddled ashore, quietly slipped across the roadway, and to my room and bed, and turned up in the morning to bathe, at five, as the betowelled and sorrowful revellers discussed poor G——'s sad and premature end.

The great curse of the place was dysentery; some of our best and bravest went down before this fell destroyer; whether it was the bad food or drink we often had, or the climate, or all combined, often three days' illness decided the fate of the strongest of us. I am a hardy fellow enough myself, yet after only one day's severe attack I have been unable to stand. If at the time of seizure the stomach or intestinal canal was inflamed by strong drink nothing could save the patient and all medicine seemed useless.

About this time happened the battle of Nasova, as it was called in derision. Thackombau came to Nasova (a valley about a mile from Levuka), at the request of ministers. Here were the Government departments, &c.

It occurred to some storekeepers and lawyers to visit the king, as an unarmed deputation, to represent and explain how improper it was in the eyes of the whites for ministers to cling to office as they were doing. So all the white residents of Levuka (not a planter was among them) one morning, headed by a well-known lawyer, started to lay their complaints before the king. A large body of native levies, commanded by this lawyer's son, were sent to prevent the whites advancing; but the whites persevered, the natives "accepting the files." When this unnatural boy called on his detachment to fire on the unarmed whites led by his own father, Ratu Timothi, the king's favourite son, countermanded the orders given. Then a lot of Tongan troops were sent down to stop the whites at all hazards; some scuffling followed, and then some foolish white fired his revolver. The Tongans then prepared to fire, a panic ensued, and every lawyer and shopkeeper bolted for his life back to Levuka. One fat and prominent resident laid behind a rock, winded, and as a better-running friend

dashed past, called out, "Tell my brother I die a Protestant, and the keys of the safe are on the chimney-piece." In explanation, I may say spiritism was rampant in Levuka just then.

Some short time after this the Tongan-cum-Fijian chief Maarfu prepared to make war on the Government and Thackombau. It was only too evident the planters would not assist the two latter, and many might aid the Tongan. In this fix, the king agreed to meet the whites, said he proposed offering Fiji to either England or America. Let the whites meet together and recommend him either course and he would adopt it. We all came together at a very large meeting and it was then agreed to ask the king to make the offer to England *only by a majority of three or four votes.* In after years, when treated with harshness and injustice, many a planter regretted his action at this historical meeting.

About this time cotton fell from 5s. to 6d. a pound, partly in consequence of the American cotton supply coming on again after the war, but principally owing to the Germans, in

driving back Garibaldi, burning the five or six mills in the south of France, which only, with the five or six more in England, used our long stapled Sea Island cotton, for making inferior silks, &c.

Then English buyers, having no rivals at the sales, gave what they liked for this hitherto high-priced article. Odd that a French war should half ruin a lot of Fijian planters.

Then came annexation, and Governor Sir A. Gordon—the Gordon blight! With the advent of British officials came boots, shoes, and coats, and the old jolly capital became as dull and prosaic as a little Australian township, and of what followed—and how our lands, for the most part honestly purchased, were *unfairly* reft from us, let others write. I have no heart to chronicle the sad story.

BY THE SKIN OF OUR TEETH

"If we fall—we shall fall as they fell,
Die, as our fathers died."

C. PHILLIPS WOLLEY.

ONE day we found ourselves at anchor in our two hundred tonner, topsail schooner recruiting off Suluhow, the largest of the small reef-islands, partly artificial, which dot the west coast of Mala or Malayta Solomons, that group now being one of the latest jewels (a very black diamond indeed) of the British Crown.

Now these Suluhowans were, and are the most savage and treacherous of all the man-eaters of Malayta, and that is saying a good deal, I can tell you. However, we had thirty or so recruits with us from Oba (one of the New Hebrides), and they watched the Solomons' men like cats. We got two or three youngsters daily,

and I, the Government agent, amused myself killing fish with dynamite in the shallow lagoon waters, and shooting shore-birds along the beach. We had been here three or four days, and everything going on quietly, when I was called back to the vessel by signal suddenly (I had been fishing on an adjoining reef). In ten minutes I was on our deck, to see some twenty recruits waiting for me, having come off in their own canoes, as they usually do here. Now no one can recruit except in the agent's presence;—but surely these men were no recruits,—they were the principal men and warriors of Suluhow; recruits are striplings and lads, from fifteen years to twenty-four or so. Many of these men were middle-aged, and had wives and children. "Surely these fathers do not want to come to work, and leave their families," I said to our interpreter (who must be always obtained). I did not know the dialect of these folk—a fellow may understand English, yet not know what a man of Somerset is saying, for instance, so here also. However the

interpreter said smoothly he did not know, they said they wanted to go and work for the whites, and that was all he could tell—they were good men and warriors—"the teeth of the town," he said, grinning diabolically. So very reluctantly at last I had to take them.

Next morning twenty more warriors turned up, from their own canoes again, and I put them on the books with many misgivings—not a boy among the lot. I was the only old hand in the ship, and it was dead against my advice we had anchored here at all. The fat first mate had given up the sea for years, and had just taken to it again, and had never been to Solomons before. The second was a mere boy, twenty-four or so, with no experience in these wild seas, and said he considered it foolish to go armed day and night as I did; the "nigs" were first-rate sort of fellows, if treated kindly, and for his part he thought were not man-eaters at all; he saw nothing of it. The captain was a quadroon, I suspect from the West Indian islands, and although a good seaman enough, not a man a fellow would

care to have at his back in a row—these half-breeds never are, in my experience. The two white sailors forward were green hands also, and followed the lead of the mates. The only folks on board who grasped the situation were the Oba lads, and their boy-chief came up and warned me the new men meant mischief.

As I walked aft thoroughly flabbergasted, up comes the captain rubbing his hands.

"We are getting along famously, G——, are we not? and you look as grim as a Viking, just ready for a row, with that Winchester across your shoulders, and that revolver on hip, one would think you were going tiger shooting."

"And that is just what I am preparing for, Captain," I burst out; "these forty Suluhow men are nothing else than human tigers, we are to get twenty more to-morrow, and they mean mischief."

"Oh! you are too suspicious," returned the skipper, "they are all right enough."

"Are they now; that is all you know

about it, Captain. You have just said it—they are human tigers, and no mistake, and they want fresh man-meat. Why, they speared *Sura Sura* Jones (mighty Jones) a few years ago, over there at Quai, and took, to my knowledge, two vessels before that, and ate their crews — and they mean to try it on with us, that's my belief; I'll arm all the Oba boys to-night anyhow, and go under fighting, if to go I have; you new chums are in a fool's paradise, and have eyes but see not, ears but hear not, minds but heed not. Why, look, man! is there a lad among all these forty men? Not one; all, to a man, fighting men, and warriors—pretty workmen these! Hang me, if you are not all fools!" and I went off in a fume.

All day I could do nothing but moon about the deck, and watch these forty new fellows, no fishing, or reading even, and I made a very poor hand at dinner and tea. A sense of impending calamity came over me, and I could not shake it off. The others chaffed me, asking me if I were afraid, but I shut them up

by saying I had little wish to become "*bokolo*" (baked man) if they had.

At 10 p.m. I got the Oba lad-chief down in the cabin, and gave him out thirty new two-foot knives, to arm (on the quiet) his men, while the mates scoffed, and the captain stared; but he went up shortly afterwards, I noticed, and set "anchor watch." I went and turned in, but I'm hanged if I could sleep a wink, and after a few hours' tossing in the bunk, went on deck, to find half the Oba boys prowling round with the long knives I had served out, under their *sulus*. Evidently *they* smelt a rat at all events. At daybreak a strange lad touched me, and whispered in good Fijian, "White man, I have a message for you, but can't give it here, meet me alone after you have eaten at that little mangrove islet yonder; don't fail," and he glided over the side like a shadow, and I heard the faint sweep of his paddle as he slipped off in the dimness of the dawn. Well, after breakfast I dropped into the big port boat lying alongside, and sculled myself off to the little island. Sure enough, I had not

landed a minute when the boy showed up from the corner of a mangrove bush, and spoke. "White man, I have been sent by the chief of Kwom-Kworo over there, who is your friend, to warn you. The men of Suluhow propose taking your vessel; they will give you a hundred recruits of their warriors—their town's teeth—and then rise and take your ship, as they have taken many in the years that are past. The fat mate, and the young one, they will at once cook, then the captain and Oba boys, but you they may spare, for you are thin and all bones; my message is now finished. White chief, give me a gun for my chief, and tobacco for myself, for I have risked my life coming to you, and dare not return until night. My love is towards Fiji, the *Marama* (lady) was kind to me there; go, and leave the things on the beach; don't look into my eyes so, I speak truth, and for a sign two cooked pigs will be sent to your ship this evening from Suluhow, open them and see," and down the lad popped under his bush again. I went and took a

musket and powder, and two or three pounds of tobacco, and laid them where indicated, and sculled quietly back to our vessel.

"Well, your brow has cleared up again, old fellow," said the skipper, "and you seem all right now."

"Because the suspense is over, Captain, and I know all," and I took him down to the cabin, and told him what I had just heard.

"Do you believe it?" he asked.

"Certainly I do," I replied; "you must know that these South Sea people can't lie to an old hand without being detected. Why, I put my hands on the lad's shoulders, and looked down into his eyes for two minutes, and he looked at me steadily. Had he spoken falsely he could not look me in the face like that—no native can."

At this the captain seemed bothered and nervous.

"We'll start at once," he said, jumping up.

"Now sit down, Captain, and let me have my say," I replied. "If you go at once all those forty fellows will jump overboard; they

have come to eat us, not to recruit, and if they jump, how many will the two boats pick up? —a dozen perhaps; sharks you say—what do these men care for sharks? they can be on the reef in ten minutes—they are sharks themselves—land sharks—ha, ha, ha! We are to get twenty more this afternoon, and twenty to-morrow, that's eighty; you just wait a day, Skip."

"No, I won't. I'm off; I'll not trust these demons; the eighty may rise—what could six whites do among such a mob?"

"Well, then, if you won't stop, you won't. Now haul up your anchor, and throw over your kedge made fast to a coir rope; there is little or no wind, anything will hold her this weather, then if you will—go. At three in the morning the kedge can come up without any noise, with the aid of the whites only, and we can slip out, with the land breeze, under jib alone. But arm the whites and boat-boys. We may have an ugly rush at sun up. I'll warn the Obas, and we'll see what the roast pig brings forth this evening."

"By Jove, G——," said the captain, "you are as wise as the serpent, if not altogether as harmless as a—well, blessed dove—your plan is splendid, and I'll do it."

In two minutes afterwards the order was, "Up Anchor," and "Out Kedge," and as the chorus of our chantey rang out, what a hubbub it caused; and from the Solomons' men, "Oh, Capataine, no go yet, plenty boy along of evening, very good, no go."

To them, the skipper, "All right, boys, no go yet, only want anchor cleaned."

This steadied the boys. The look the old salt forward gave as he was sent to chip the rust off our best bower was a sight to see, and the captain whispered me, "Great Scott, G——, you were right; these beggars would have been over in a second, had they seen a sail stirred."

After dinner twenty more stalwart warriors came off in their canoes, and were put on the books with the usual formalities, and they signed on as cheerily as possible,—all fighting men too. This made sixty of these wretches;

the game was getting interesting now, and the stakes — *were our lives ;* warm work, my masters!

In the gloaming the pigs came off, presents from the Suluhow chief to his men on board—would the captain allow them to be accepted?

"Oh yes, up with them." An immense big long pig baked whole and decked with flowers and greenery was passed up first, the Solomons gathered round to receive it, jostling aside all others. Great was the dismay when I strode among them and insisted on opening the pig. They made every objection, but I was firm, and there was panic as a boat-boy at my order ripped up the string sewing up the stomach—a layer of splendid yams done to a turn. "Move them aside," was the order, and there, row on row lay forty war-axes shining in grease, and handles gleaming with pearl. The first mate's ruddy face paled and fell, the second's jaw dropped, the forecastle men's hands slipped to their knife-handles, and for a minute you could hear a pin drop. The Suluhows fell back, dismay on every face. The

skipper and myself alone kept our heads and were cool, "did not turn a hair, by ——" as the forecastle said afterwards. The other pig brought forth twenty axes—"one for every man, by Jove," said the skipper.

"Put those axes over the side, and tell the chief of Suluhow we take his pigs and return his axes, and" (significantly),! "he may want them to-morrow. Are his fighting fences up? Tell him, you interpreter,! give him our message—go! and you Solomon men take your pigs forward and eat them."

So savage were the Obas they refused to touch a bit of the feast, nor would the hands forward, or we aft. I imagine few of us whites slept that night; two of us armed marched up and down, the two four-pounders aft on each side of the wheel were cleaned and reloaded. At 3 a.m. the whites were silently mustered, and gently and very quietly up came the kedge and the jib, and we moved silently to the reef passage, like some huge night-bird under the silvery moon, with hardly a breath of air.

At daylight we made the open sea, and up

went all sail. The Solomon men came pouring out of the hold yelling and shouting, but all was ready. The thirty lads aft behind me yelled their wild Oba war chant, and swung their two-foot knives aloft, and the blades gleamed in the rising sun. Every white and boat-boy was armed and waiting, even to the man at the wheel.

"Take us back," yelled the Suluhow men in their pigeon English, "no want go Fiji, we gammon."

"I no gammon—I talk, you no sign, you sign on, you go now, you want um long pig eh? —no catch him this time. Down you go to the hold '*Kai bokolos*' (eaters of men)," I shouted.

"Swing round the four-pounder," yelled the captain, and slowly the gun-carriage came round, and the gun was levelled. For a minute you might have heard a pin drop on board— then slowly and sullenly the Suluhow men turned and went down the hold to their bunks again, amidst the derisive yells of the Oba boys. The gage of battle was declined, and I breathed freely; a "muss" was averted— By the skin of our Teeth."

UP AMONG THE MAN-EATERS IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES.

"I am a part of all that I have met."
TENNYSON.

HAVING received an invite from a Levukaian acquaintance to accompany him on a labour-hunting expedition into the mountainous interior of Viti Levu, I accepted the opportunity of seeing something of the cannibals at home, and this is an account of my trip—taken from my diary.

One fine evening I found myself on board the smart little cutter *Albert*, of ten tons, bound for Viti Levu Bay, the point from where the inward journey was to commence. The captain set to at once tripping the anchor, but it positively refused to come; overboard dived one of our native crew feet first (Fiji way of diving) to have a look, and he reported the anchor fast under a great stone in nine fathoms.

The offer of a dollar set all our boys diving to free it, and they continued their attempts until dark, and blood had come from their ears, eyes, and mouths. However, next morning a Yassawaian Island (a chain of islands the most westerly in the group) native came on board, and at the first try freed the anchor, and went off, rich and happy in a dollar and a *sulu* (a *sulu* is a fathom of cheap calico, the usual dress of a Fijian). Think of diving nine fathoms—fifty-four feet—and pulling out a heavy anchor. Could any white do it, I wonder?

A day or two afterwards we landed at Viti Levu town in the bay of that name for the purpose of getting guides; but these it was found hard to obtain, as the town was at war with the inland tribes. This was bad news for us.

However, the chief, Na Tambu Levu, received us kindly. We found him in the middle of a feast of baked pig and *taro*, or *dalo*, as it is called here. The natives are most hospitable, food being always presented to the stranger, and it was not long before some roast *dalo* and the most toothsome parts of the pig were

before us; for my part I had a good look before the pig was cut up, to satisfy myself it was the real Simon Pure, and not a baked boy or girl, as the case might be *bokolo* (pronounced *mbokolo*) as such food is called here. These natives are not Christian yet, as most of the coast tribes are; they have put away the gods of their forefathers, and are now halting between two opinions; at such a time they are generally supposed to be specially dangerous. But before eating came the national *yangona* bowl; my companion was an old resident, and *kava*[1]—as it is sometimes called—was as mother's milk to him, while I (tell it not in Gath) had learned to like the Fijian bowl, which cheers, but does not inebriate. Whether liked or not, drink we should, as it would give mortal offence to refuse the Fijian emblem of friendship. Everything was done in old Fijian fashion (*Vaka-viti*).

Two youngsters with unexceptionable ivories

[1] In another part of this book I have described *kava*-drinking generally, including the Fijian custom; however, at the risk of a little repetition, I do not excise this account here, as it gives details not mentioned in the other.

came in on their knees (*roko-roko*, *i.e.*, respectfully) to *chew* the *yangona* root (*kava* being the root of a small shrub of the pepper family cultivated regularly by the people—it takes three years to mature) clapping of hands when chewing was over, and water being added, spreading of hands and blessing by the old men when the *kava* was strained and ready. Then came the drinking *meke* (song) by the whole company, a boy crawling up the middle of the house on his knees, and presenting the bowl, the white men first, after them the chief, and so on, each drinking according to rank. The Bau chief accompanying us, Paula (Paul)—having been sent by Ratu Abele, the king's son, with presents to the mountaineer heathen chiefs—drinking after the local magnate in this case.

As each man finishes his bowl (an ornamented cocoanut shell holding nearly a pint) he throws it (not hands it) towards the *kava* makers, amidst clapping of hands and thighs, and shouting of "*Sa Matha*" (It is dry, or finished) from all hands ; each as he drains his bowl blows the *yangona* from his moustache by a peculiar

whistling-like expulsion of the breath, and calls out his toast—a good wind, and such like, being the usual expressions. I said I regretted not being a Benedict, which caused a general laugh. *Yangona* is drunk with much ceremony, and its etiquette is not picked up in a day by the new-comer. Fiji grog, as the whites call *yangona*, has a peculiar effect on the system; when drunk in moderation, and a little food eaten after, it calms and soothes, and an inclination to sleep is experienced; if food is not eaten after drinking it stimulates the brain and one cannot sleep. When taken to excess, say fifteen or twenty bowls at a sitting, or anything hot, such as tea for instance, drunk at once afterwards it affects the brain—a severe pressure is felt on the forehead—the knees refuse to act, and one cannot walk in consequence. If much mental work is required it is extraordinary how a bowl of *kava* clears one's brain, if taken a little before starting.

If drunk hot it is said to be a deadly poison, and it is injurious if laid aside for a few hours. It must be drunk shortly after being made.

Girls—little things of ten or eleven—chew it in Tonga and Samoa, and on most of the islands, but here and in the interior boys take their places. It is considered in Fiji a very powerful blood purifier, and has a strong, peculiar, and stimulating effect on the kidneys. Perhaps it only requires to be better known to become a valuable medicine. There is a *kava* story told in Fiji, which shows how strong social custom is among these folk. Here it is, as it was told to me—

"Some years ago a wandering white went further among the cannibals than was quite safe, and in one of the interior towns he was received very doubtfully; he, however, sat down in the chief's house, and after some hours the natives set to preparing a quantity of *kava*, and the white man, understanding more of their language than they imagined, found to his horror that when it was drunk he was to be clubbed and eaten, and that the earth oven was being heated for him. He, however, kept his presence of mind, and knowing the native customs, waited until the great *yangona* bowl was

ready, and the chief had drunk the first cup, and as the boy carrying the second crawled by him, the white put out his hand for it, saying at the same time, it was his drink, and, before he could be prevented, finished the bowl; in his confusion the boy had handed him the *kava*. The white then marched through the astonished natives, and sat by the chief, saying, 'Now as we have drunk *yangona* together, we are friends, and you can't kill me, you had better put a pig in your oven instead of me.' Imperative social native custom prevailed, and the white escaped —thanks to his ready wit and the native drinking habits."

While waiting for the guide I set to exploring the town. It is built for the most part (like all Fijian towns in the interior) on an almost inaccessible peak of rock about three hundred feet high; two other neighbouring peaks having other portions of the town upon them. The path was exceedingly difficult, and although I was barefooted, as is customary in this country, full of streams, I found it dangerous to climb up and down. As one morning I climbed up this

narrow way, barely a foot wide, a precipice on one side, a smooth rock on the other, I met a young girl carrying a basket of yams on her back coming down; neither could turn, the path was so narrow, and we gazed on each other for five minutes, without speaking, I knew not her dialect. Then slowly, very slowly, she got on her knees, the yams still on her back, and finally lay down on her face, and I crawled over her; as I did so I gave her ten leaves of tobacco, and she smiled her thanks.

Towns are built in such positions for protection in time of war, as one brave man could keep the path against a tribe; yet about three years ago the whole of this town was burnt by Bau men.

At last Mr. "Na Tambu Levu" promised us a guide after two days' waiting, being prompted thereto by sundry small presents and the bouncing talk of our Bau man.

The chief is an old man and has some power, having seven or eight tributary towns under him. The old heathen has two or three wives in each; his predecessor, Ramba-Ramba, was

killed about two years ago, by treachery, his head being cut off with an axe by a visitor while asleep in his own house. This caused a long war, and the present one is supposed to be connected with this murder.

The Bau chief told me in a moment of confidence that the last time he visited this district, a few years ago, a man was killed and eaten in his honour—this was said with a genuine sigh of regret, doubtless at the degeneracy of the age.

Next morning, the guide turning up, we started at daybreak up the river Ruku-Ruku by boat, accompanied by the Bau man and his presents of mats. The river is about fifty yards wide near its mouth, and is navigated by boat for about four miles. We disembarked close to Messrs. Leviney's and Strong's plantation. Some three years previously six of their labourers were killed here while at work, by the heathens, but now they have no trouble; they work Fijians exclusively, and pay a shilling or a *sulu* a week to each worker.[1]

Our party were very lightly equipped for

[1] This was some years ago, of course.

the long and difficult journey before us. The guide carried some trade goods and food for one meal only—even our coats and blankets were left behind. The whole of our number were bare-footed—which, after the first month, when the feet harden, is much the most pleasant mode in Fiji—and we had only one revolver amongst us, it being represented that too great a show of firearms excited the suspicions of the natives.

The party travelled Indian file, the narrow Fijian track allowing of no other arrangement. After going up a steep range the land seemed to improve, the great rocks of the coasts being no longer seen, the country being a succession of low hills with small plains of luxuriant grass between—a beau-ideal cattle station it would make.

After a two hours' trudge we saw a large party of natives coming in our direction. When first observed, our guide and the Bau man were in front, but they quickly and quietly slipped to the rear on seeing the *Kai Tholos* (*i.e.*, mountaineers); but the white must look for

this sort of thing. It is always the way—the English must lead, ever and always.

On seeing whites approaching, natives sat down in a cluster, and waited for us to come up. There were about fifty men, besides women and children. On hearing we were going to their town, they became very friendly, and we had a long shaking hands all round—this fashion learnt from the whites of course. They were going to the coast to attend a *So-levu* (feast), and to get salt water, under permit from the fighting tribes—a flag of truce in fact. Many of the warriors had old Brown Besses loaded, besides clubs and spears. A retriever belonged to one of our party; his size, fetching powers, and prompt obedience, seemed to excite their admiration greatly, and he was followed by a lot of young girls and children, amidst shouts of "*Sombo Sombo*" (expressions of admiration) and shaking of fingers. Although one of our party spoke Fijian well, yet he could only make out a word here and there of what these people said, their language being different from that of Bau, and even from that

of the coast tribes. We soon left these natives and continued our journey, crossing numerous watercourses on the way, and about one o'clock came to a fine stream called the Wai Mala; the water was beautifully clear and pure, and flowed through a grove of lime and shaddock trees laden with fruit, unfortunately unripe. Gigantic bamboos lined the banks, in many places thirty feet high, and as thick as the calf of the leg. Large parrots darted about, and blue pigeons, whose constant cooing resembled a dog barking at a little distance, were plentiful. A large clump of bamboos was on fire at a little distance, and the continual bursting of their divisions resembled volleys of small arms. After a short rest we started again, the path becoming very bad, and continually rising. We were here overtaken by some six or seven young girls from the party we had passed. They had forgotten some yams, and were running back to the next town, twenty miles off, for them—did not seem to mind the double journey a bit. The character of the country remained unchanged.

About 4 p.m. we reached the Wai Mbuka (like firewater), a large river about seventy yards wide, with very steep banks, showing that in wet weather a very large body of water flows through; it joins the Rewa at the other side of the island. When crossing this river we were overtaken again by the girls on their return with the yams; the party was just able to wade, carrying our clothes on our heads, but these young ladies—ahem!—did not mind the situation in the least, but plunged in without a moment's hesitation and passed us in mid-stream with shouts of "*Sa mothi*" ("good-night").

It was laughable to observe the extreme watchfulness of the guide. At the top of every little hill he stopped and had a good look round, and once, hearing the dog rustle in a clump of reeds, bounded off the path like a deer, and had hidden himself in no time. This guide, Tui Rara (the king of the town square or talking-place), said that he would never have come up with us only he happened to be *vasu* to the mountain towns; according

to Fiji custom a *vasu* can take the property, and even use the power of his uncles, and if a person's mother in Fiji happens to be a woman of rank, and has many brothers, it follows a *vasu* has almost unlimited power in the towns over which his uncles hold sway, and it equally follows that uncles as a rule care not for many nephews, and—well—let their sisters know it, all rank being counted from the mother's side, on the principle that every man knows his own mother. We were told that large fish, a sort of mullet, and immense eels, were caught in the Wai Mbuka. Of the former fish we subsequently had one for tea, and found it excellent. Canoes sometimes go down to the sea by this river. Unmarried girls here wear a grass girdle but a span deep, the married ladies and men wear it longer; the white man's calico for *sulus* has not got up here as yet.

All along the path on each side we noticed little heaps of reeds, some old, and some fresh gathered, and the guide as he passed added to each heap a bit of reed. We were informed

these heaps marked the places where natives had been attacked while journeying, the dead reeds showing the places where the wayfarer had been killed, and the live ones (fresh gathered) showing he had escaped with his life. We noticed also that among these very suggestive little heaps, the dead ones seemed to predominate, and the writer for one felt a hankering for his trusty Snider left on board the boat. These reed heaps, rude chronicles of many a bloody tragedy, occurred pretty frequently, sometimes in clumps, showing where a party had been surprised; and our guide added religiously to each. Years ago in the disturbed parts of the south of Ireland little heaps of stones (added to continually by the peasants) on the side of the roads, marked similarly where murders had been—human nature is the same, black or white, all the world over.

Passed some towns in the distance, each on the top of some high peak; the population seems small, perchance the feeding habits of the people forbid its increase. About 5.30

we came to a small tributary, a town, Uli Kate. The young chief sat outside on the *rara* (talking-place) in his war dress, club on shoulder, and face blackened, and not a word would he say. We whites walked and sat next him. I slipped my hand under my shirt, where my revolver lay under the armpit, and covered him, and there we sat half an hour (it seemed to me half a day) in the gloaming, looking into each other's eyes, while his warriors marched round us, singing, and on the other side of me my chum whispered, "Don't miss when you shoot, and I'll pin his club, and 'go under' club in hand at all events;" while that beastly Bau chief muttered behind in broken English, "Why don't you fire; we will all be dead in five minutes." The situation was getting strained, and—well, my nerves began to quiver, when suddenly from out of the opposite house sprang the talking man of the tribe, and as he sprang throwing the *yangona* root high in air, welcoming the whites to the village, and so "the situation" vanished, and we had *kava* with all the honours.

I cautioned the young chief as to the risk he had run, but he said he knew he had been covered, and that he was dealing with white chiefs, and not with cowardly Bau men, which showed at least, that he had kept his eyes about him. As we left the town an old woman swore that my chum was her long-lost (probably eaten) son, and it took two fathoms of cloth to persuade her to let him go. It was after dark when we got to the town *Buli-Buli-gone* (a feast or creation of children).

The chief, men, women, and children turned out *en masse* to welcome us, and see the white men, and the shaking of hands was an ordeal (a fashion the natives have learnt from us), the dog as before the centre of curiosity, his prompt obedience exciting wild shouts of approval. Well received by the old chief, Niu Dumu (red cocoanut), who actually gave us tea and sugar for supper, with taro and fish, to the light of a kerosene lamp. The chief is an old man and has about fifty wives—does not know the exact number himself; when asked where were they, he swept his hand round the

horizon and said, "All round everywhere." He has also many children; a large number of these died young, hence a superstition prevails, which has increased his power, that if he looks on his children they die. Great care is now taken to keep them from him. Doubtless the old fellow disliked squallers, and started the idea himself (such a little game is dedicated to the fathers of all noisy youngsters). He lives in a good, rather small house, just built—the old one having been totally destroyed by an opposing tribe. This house has doors (very unusual in a Fiji house) about two inches thick, and cut out of one piece of wood. It was explained that such things were used to prevent a lurking foe from firing into the house.

After tea came in a breathless outpost with the news that the town was to be attacked that night, and the whites had been allowed to march into the trap—pleasant tidings for us who were almost unarmed. The old men now gathered together, and a long council was held. The chief made a speech, which was received with

great clapping of hands and thighs. As a result a number of sentries were posted, and the great *lali* (drum of wood) beaten every half-hour during the night, a lot of old Brown Besses were loaded and placed round the house, and the doors shut. The chief asked where our guns were. He was shown the revolver, but said, "Short little guns were good, but long ones were better." Our Bau man and guide both seemed very restless, and probably wished themselves anywhere else. The chief warned us not to go out, or open the doors, as we might be fired at or clubbed. I was presented with a native club, and I asked to be roused in the event of an attack, it being white fashion to go under fighting if go under we should; but was answered, "Who can wake a chief, or a white man?" (it being considered disrespectful to do so). These measures being taken, all our party being very tired, we rolled ourselves up in our mats, and slept as if war-drums, big beads, devils (white name for the heathen), *bokolos* (roast men), &c., were things that did not concern us in the least.

The Bau chief told us, as a sort of good-night, that we should have to fight, for if taken, one half the foe would set to preparing the great earth ovens and the other lot would set to dancing the *bokolo* dance, and a couple of hours would settle the little business. Towards morning it became so cold we were unable to sleep, being accustomed to the heat of the coast.

However, the night passed without attack, the chief said in consequence of whites being in the town—the timid natives fear the pluck of the white. For breakfast the chief produced tea, sugar, and Melbourne Company's preserved beef. These things he had obtained for men, together with bolts of cloth, axes, long knives, &c. These men go to work for a year on the plantations, a lot of trade, as above, being given to the chief standing about 10s. to 15s. each head. This is called *yangona*, from the habit of drinking *kava* to conclude and bind the transaction. At the end of a year's work the men receive about three pounds' worth of trade — what they may fancy. They work

better than the Christian natives, and as they are mostly well-fed and treated kindly, the trip among the lads is very popular. This labour costs now in Levuka from £2 to £3 per head, the planter paying and returning them to their homes at the year's end. After breakfast the chief sent a lot of guns, caps, powder, and balls to the tributary towns. He soon followed himself to consult about getting labour for us. This town is built on the top of a very steep hill in an exceedingly strong position, and the chief's house is surrounded by a large earth-work, making it, in fact, a kind of fort. There are about sixty houses in the town, amongst the rest a large house built for a church, but when this was finished the old chief had changed his mind and refused to *lotu*. We did not, however, see any of their devil priests, and the people declared they were friends with Bau, whose messenger, indeed, and mats were well received. There are no cocoanut-trees here—they do not bear well inland. The natives will not stir, even from one house to another, without their guns, and they constantly asked

why we did not carry ours. *Kava*-drinking was going on all day in the chief's house. The principal food is *indalo mandrai* (native bread) and yams, wild and cultivated.

Both men and women are very ugly, the old women being especially hideous. They are a smaller, darker, and less strongly built race than the coast tribes, who have more or less intermingled with Tongans, and they appear to approach more nearly to the negro or Papuan type. They also seem much less merry than the coast natives, which perhaps is in consequence of being nearly always in a chronic state of war. About a month ago the chief's brother and forty men were killed at an outpost town. The chief's body was rescued by a forlorn hope, but the men were baked and eaten. Some young men came from a neighbouring town to see the whites, and asked to be shown some *ai lavo* (money), which they had never seen. We were asked to the afternoon *kava*-drinking; but I declined, on the plea that the chief was absent, but really because I had seen one of

the old men mix some pounded leaves in it. I told my friend, but he laughed and drank, and down he fell, like a shot, unconscious. I was in a great pickle, as I could not bring him to ; but luckily the chief now came home, and told me it was only something the old men put in to make them sleep, and he would be all right in an hour or two ; but he slept for six. They declined afterwards to show us the leaf used. The chief regretted he was now unable to give us men, as the fighting was hot, but come again when it was over and he would give all we wanted. The young visitors gave us a big *meke ;* it appeared greater than the coast dances, and was kept up until near morning. Next day the chief took me aside, and asked me to remain with him and help him fight, offering me a score of wives ; but this awful prospect I respectfully but firmly refused. After breakfast and a friendly bowl of *kava* we made our presents and said goodbye to the old chief, who was most polite and dignified. He offered us an escort of forty men to the coast, which we thought it best to decline, and presented me

with his neck ornament—a pearl oyster-shell polished—and his *kava* cup: I have the latter yet.

As we returned the way we came, suddenly a big warrior stepped out of the long grass just in front of me; he was armed and painted for war, and asked why we did not *roko-roko* to him (stoop down respectfully); we said we were whites and never *rokoed*—only slaves did so. He was, after this, civil enough, asked for powder and shot. We said we had none. Asked our business, and offered us men, when he had taken the town. We made him a present of a bottle of scented oil, and parted with the white handshake. We at last got aboard our smart little cutter by moonlight thoroughly baked, and thus ended our forty-mile trip inland, and three days amongst the man-eaters of Vitu Levu.

"*BALOLO' FISHING IN FIJI*

"These see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep."—PSA. cvii. 24.

PROBABLY not one in a hundred knows what a "*balolo*" really is, and it is very possible no one has any correct ideas about it —not even the scientists, odd as it may seem.

Imagine a centipede the thickness of a knitting-needle and coloured either dark red, or green, or brown, or even whitish, and varying from a foot to an inch in length, and you have the exact appearance of a balolo.

They are found on only two mornings of the whole year swimming on the surface of the sea in countless multitudes; sometimes their numbers actually colour the sea for miles; they are generally seen on and around certain reefs in Fiji, from two hours before sunrise until say about two hours after. Some folk argue they

are simply the reef insect, while others contend they rise from the bottom of the deep. No one knows their life-history, whence they come, or whither they go; if the reef insect, why should they not appear on all reefs? But this they do not, only show up on some—in fact a few only. The natives say these, what are they?—insects—come up to meet each other simply—and this may be correct, as they all try to cluster together in great bunches. It is said they are also found in Samoa and New Guinea, and there (in these places), as in Fiji, they only rise for two days in the year. They are also probably caught in other parts of that great waste of waters called the South Seas, but if such is the case the writer knoweth not.

Two or three hours before sunrise on the morning of the full moon in October up the balolo come from—who knows where?—swim about for four or five hours or so, and then down again. This month is therefore called by the people *Vula Balolo*[1] *lai-lai* (the small

[1] The word "Balolo" is pronounced *Imbalolo*, the letter B in Fijian taking M before it.

balolo moon). At the same hour and time in November up they rise again, swim round as before, and then down until next year, and that month is named "The Moon of the Great Balolo," by the natives.

These couple of days are considered by the Fijians as the two greatest holidays of the year, devoted to fun and frolic, and balolo catching, and eating, for the balolo is considered by all and sundry as the best of food. They are pressed into lumps the size of an orange, tied up in breadfruit leaves and slightly boiled; when these lumps are sliced and fried, or curried, they are very good, and taste to the white like dressed crab. They are preserved by the people for about three weeks, by giving them a slight boil daily, and are sent as presents to friends and relatives, as we do bridal cake or game.

Now I will try to describe a morning's fishing. The natives know to the hour when to expect the balolo, and prepare days beforehand. My local chief invited me, his white man, to join his canoe fleet; we had to start at midnight as

we had some miles to paddle to the reef, and as the night was cool for Fiji I took my rug. As I came along the beach in the moonlight, I saw the largest canoes of the town launched and waiting, as all the villagers go, men and women, down to the merest youngster. The nearest was all manned and loaded with girls. Next her was the chief's canoe. As I passed to join her, soft words and soft arms coaxed me to go in their woman's boat—they were the best swimmers, and would show me best how to catch balolo (and this is correct—from childhood the woman's work is to fish the reefs daily, and often nightly, for reef fish, so they become far more expert at swimming and diving than the men), "Ah, let their white chief and king come with them." Well, what could a fellow do? In vain the chiefs urged the *kava* was being prepared, the women carried their point as they always do, and I went with them —and paid for it afterwards, as you shall hear—so off we paddled gaily in the bright moonlight, the paddlers singing in time to their strokes, over the breezeless, balmy sea. The great

chorus from some two or three hundred voices, and the blowing conch-shell from each canoe frightening the half tame old shark of our bay, daily fed by the village folk, as one who guards them from the wild ocean sharks, while the youngsters of the town swim and sport in their warm waters, secure in the knowledge that their own shark will do them no harm, for the jealous old brute will not allow an outsider to share his good quarters, nor will he touch a fellow-townsman—not he.

After a few hours' steady paddling we reach the reef, which experience has proved for generations as being the best for balolo, and here we anchor, waiting for the first streak of dawn which heralds their arrival. It was chilly, so I rolled myself in my rug, hearing, as I dozed off, the chief woman cautioning the two youngsters as watchers to be sure and not go to sleep, for if they did the boys would certainly upset our canoe if they could swim to it unobserved.

Next thing I remember I was hanging on the reef a fathom or two under water trying to get

out of my rug. The little guards had slept and we were upset, the balolo—ugh!—were in my hair and crawling all over me under my shirt. The canoe was righted at once, bailed out, rug dived for and shirt discarded, which two laughing girls appropriated at once, tied up the neck part and arms, and turned it into a balolo trap for the time, and the chaff and badinage and fun waxed fast and furious.

The balolo covered the surface of the sea within sight in their thousands. The cry to "commence" rang out from the chief's canoe. We swam to where balolo clustered most, filling basket and bag with the wriggling masses and throwing them into the canoes. I used an old wire gauze meat cover, which was most effective; and so we swam, and romped, and fished, and raced from cluster to cluster, and stole each other's baskets. Just as one put out his arms to scoop in a particularly large clump, some larking lad or lassie would pull him under by the heels; and so we fished and played until about 7 a.m., when suddenly, as if obeying a command, every balolo sunk to the depths like

magic—it was wonderful how quickly they disappeared.

Home we paddled in the glorious morning, chanting, shouting, singing, and even dancing on the canoe *raras* (decks), for the catch was large, and we got home before the great trade wind had set in.

Two days afterwards, roving over the plantation, I heard crying in the thick scrub, and on going to investigate found the two sleepy little guard-girls were tied up to trees to receive twenty lashes for allowing the canoe to be upset. After a lot of trouble I begged the culprits off on a promise of a pipeful of beads to each of the fair—ahem !—jury, and two for the little judge-girl. I am afraid this was tampering with the source of justice, but what could a fellow do? Next day turned up a hungry naval officer, a lieutenant of one of those little cruisers sent to these waters some years ago by the British Government ; there was nothing in the house but salt beef and balolo, so the latter was sliced and fried, and the hungry one had three helpings, ditto for tea—curried, and next

morning the same. After breakfast, when leaving, the guest asked, with many apologies, what he had been eating, as it was excellent, he really could not remember when he had anything he had so appreciated; when told it was balolo he seemed quite taken aback, but finally asked for a few balls of it—to practise on his captain.

A year or so after I went to a "little balolo" fishing, this time in a white man's boat, with some twenty or thirty lads and lasses. The balolo rose as before, yet not in such vast quantities as during the November fishing, and we caught them, and dived, and splashed each other, and rushed after the clusters of writhing insects as on the previous occasion. But other strange fishers joined us now. It was dead low water when we began, but as the tide rose great sharks came over the edge of the reef, seawards, close to us, feeding ravenously on the clustering balolo, and taking not the slightest notice of us. This was too much for my chum and self—whites—as it is a well-known South Sea fact that when sharks attack a mixed

party of white and native swimmers, the former are invariably chosen first. We two made for the boat then ; so little did our Fijians care for these great fish that one young girl, just as the big brute turned sideways to take the clump of balolo she was trying for, struck him heavily over the head with her fishing stick, partially stunning the monster.

However, after a time the sharks became too numerous, and the careless youngsters were glad to get to the boat also. One of us climbed the boat's mast, and the sight was an extraordinary one ; as far as the eye could see in the dim dawn, the surface of the ocean outside the reef was white with great fish dashing after the balolo. The wondering Fijians said they were all sharks, but, as their own proverb has it, "who knows?"

IN MALICOLO

"'And now the land,' said Othere,
'Bent southward suddenly,
And I followed the curving shore,
And ever southward bore
Into a nameless sea.'"

LONGFELLOW.

I IMAGINE few could tell, on the spur of the moment, where the great island of Malicolo really is, although it is perhaps half the size of Ireland, and is the second largest island in the New Hebrides.

Its people are in many respects the most peculiar in the group, and have mixed less with the surrounding islanders and the whites than any of the others, so perhaps some account of their peculiarities may not prove uninteresting. I need hardly premise they are greatly addicted to cannibalism—as indeed are most of the native folk in the Western Pacific. The people are poor sailors, and less enterprising than their neighbours, their canoes being small

and inferior, they are also timid and treacherous. They make arrows tipped with a more deadly poison than any used in the South Seas; these are held in high esteem by natives of the other islands, and command large prices all over the group. The people are slow and cautious in their advances to strangers, and decline to place their wives, families, and goods generally at the disposal of the first visitor, as their next-door neighbours, the people of the large island of Santo, frequently do. For these reasons I imagine the Malicoloites will hold their own longer than any other of the natives of the New Hebrides.

No missionary has as yet obtained a footing on the island nor any white traders, if we except the military settlement of late established by the French, on the north-east coast, and its dependent trading stations, about Port Sandwich.[1]

The land is exceedingly fertile, especially on the south coast, consisting of black volcanic

[1] Such was the case a few years ago at all events, latterly things have altered a little in these respects.

soil of great depth. It is covered with dense forests, which come down to the very edge of the salt water, except towards the north of the island, where the scrub does not extend; the land here is undulating and covered with rank, long grass, seemingly admirably adapted for cattle. The whole island is densely peopled, and large quantities of cocoanuts fringe its shores, particularly on eight or ten small islands that line the north coast — Kovua, Natsan, Rano, &c. The people, however, do not make copra (the sun-dried kernel of the cocoanut), being in fact too lazy to do so. They are indifferent to clothing, and have few outside wants except pipes and tobacco.

> "For every dusky lady, and every lady's lord,
> They all smoke jacky, a kind of tobaccy,
> And scatter its juices abroad."

The usual trade is besides guns and powder (the barter of which is now prohibited to us) blue and red paint, small white and coloured beads, hunter's hatchets, and mission tomahawks. The natives offer in exchange for these, pigs (females, the boars are never sold,

being retained for the purchase of wives), fowls, yams, taro, and cocoanuts.

I will now more particularly confine myself to describing the south and west coasts, as they are the least known. On entering a village—and unless friendly with the chiefs and people, you will not be asked (and it is advisable for obvious reasons to await an invitation)—the first things you observe are two huge idols on each side of the path. These are the protectors of the town. They are generally huge logs, cut and carved in the rude likeness of men, and ten or twelve feet high, painted black, red, and blue; they are probably rough representations of the remote ancestors of the tribe, and are often very old. The religion of these people, as far as can be made out, is essentially the worship of ancestors pure and simple. They do not pray to the shark, alligator, or snake, &c., as is the practice in other parts of the Pacific, indeed they eat the first named when they can catch him. The vicinity of the town is often planted with pretty shrubs, shady trees, and bright-leaved crotons, and of course

the ever-waving cocoanut palms, these latter providing food and drink always to the villagers (they are continually in bearing ; blossom, young drinking nuts, and old ripe ones, are seen all on one tree together, at the same time).

After passing the idols you generally come to the temple (the devil-house of the sailors). This is the club and guild house of the town as well, and is by far the largest structure in the village. It stands from twenty to thirty feet high, and about the same length ; the walls are very low, and the roof very high-pitched, built, as all the other houses are, of cocoanut-trees and bamboo rafters, and dried reeds for walls and roof.

There are no windows and only one large door at the end, with a broad verandah in front of it. No woman or uncircumcised boy dare enter this sacred and gloomy abode, under pain of death. The men use it as a sort of strangers' or club house, where they meet to yarn, and feed, undisturbed by the women and children, pigs and dogs. The walls are lined round with effigies of deceased chiefs

and warriors of the tribe, "in their habits as they lived," their bows, arrows, and clubs in their hands.

When a chief or warrior dies he is buried for a time; when the flesh has left the bones the head is dug up, the artist of the tribe takes it in hand, a hollow bamboo body is manufactured, arms and legs carved out of wood after the fashion of a child's doll, but life-size, the face modelled on the skull with clay, the whole blackened and painted, hair gummed on, and the figure set up in the temple. It is astonishing what good likenesses these rude people turn out in this way. In many of the temples also small hollow wooden drums are found (in some villages these are absent), one for each dead chief. In times of doubt and danger, when the elders of the tribe meet to confer, these drums are beaten, then the spirit of the departed enters his image in the temple, and joins the conference, by influencing the mind of his living descendant in the council. In the temple of the island of Ur, on the south coast, there are some five hundred or so of

these little drums. Once the writer foolishly beat one, and very nearly paid the penalty of his temerity with his life. The temple filled with armed warriors in a moment. Fortunately he had known in life the dead chief whose drum had been sounded, and his native friend, who guided him, with ready wit, coolly told the excited natives, the white wished to speak with his departed friend. The ruse succeeded, the people respectfully withdrew to allow the white man to confer with the spirit of the dead warrior. It is odd that even in such a wild and savage land man instinctively believes in the immortality of the soul.

On leaving the temple you come to the houses of the villagers each built a little apart from the others. They are made in a similar way to the temple, only in miniature, few being over six feet high. The natives sleep on the ground, having only a rough sort of mat made of cocoanut leaves under them. Pigs, fowls, and dogs are freely admitted; and it is not unusual to see the mother sow, with a goodly litter, and the youngsters of the house all

asleep together in the middle of the floor, and I once saw the house baby joining the little pigs at their morning's drink. This is the more peculiar as at the neighbouring island of Santo the natives do not allow a pig or fowl inside their yards even. One is seldom offered food in these Maliloco villages, as is the invariable practice in most South Sea islands. They have plenty, however, but the people are not very hospitable. The men go about nearly naked, with a bark belt, sometimes six inches broad, drawn tightly round the waist, and the usual T bandage of the islands. The women generally use a small narrow mat, four or five inches deep, fastened tightly round the hips, in addition to the belt. The men carry their bows, arrows, short club or mission axe, always in hand, and even sleep with their weapons beside them (and they look on any one who goes unarmed as a fool, in fact the man here, who goes without his weapons, simply invites his fate, this universal native rule never is forgotten). It is not so long ago among us that every gentleman carried his sword. The

whites never go here without revolver and rifle, at least I never did. Generally only five or six arrows in a bundle of thirty or forty are poisoned, these are kept in little hollow reeds as small quivers for each arrow to exclude damp or wet which is injurious. The men are expert marksmen, hitting anything the size of your hand at forty or fifty yards. The clubs used are short and peculiar, only about three feet long, often with faces (Janus-like) carved on the heavy end. The natives are very skilful in their use. I have seen two lads fighting with them for ten minutes or so, and neither had a scratch when parted. The spear is not used on the south coast, but on the north; it in a great measure takes the place of the bow and arrow in the south. These latter are simply made of reeds unfeathered, with a bit of heavy wood at the pointed end, while the extreme point is made of human bone; the new-made arrow is first put into a decaying human body, generally that of a high chief or warrior, as the deceased's bravery and power (his

"*mana*") are supposed to enter the arrow, a white's body is greatly prized for this purpose, but is not considered good eating, being too salt. The arrow-point is then carefully dried and afterwards smeared frequently with the juice of a tree which grows in swampy places all over the South Seas. This is the active principle, and seems to have much the same effect when it mixes with the blood, as strychnine has when taken internally, the wounded man generally dying in from three to six days in fearful spasms, affecting the spinal cord and nerve centres. The only cure the whites have is sucking, and the prompt use of the knife. I saved a native once, who had been shot in the thigh, by at once cutting a hole as big as the finger, and filling it up with pure carbolic acid. The flesh hissed as if it were being cooked. Strange to say, under this heroic treatment the man recovered—promised me a pig—but never gave it, and bolted. Some years after I met him again ; how bothered the fellow looked for a moment, and then promptly took to his heels !

The natives seem to have no cure, except sucking. When a man finds himself wounded by a poisoned arrow, he sings out, all his friends run up and give him all their spare poisoned ones, and he runs "*amok*," into the middle of the fight firing at every one he sees until clubbed, and a man being thus wounded generally wins the battle for his side, as he devotes himself to death and the infernal gods —*à la* Roman style.

The children go entirely unclothed. The women are very timid, stepping out of the white man's path, and generally dropping down and sitting on their heels until he has passed. The married have the two front teeth in the upper jaw knocked out to show their status. This is to keep any stray bachelor from paying them the slightest attention, as the men are very jealous. I never could see the reason, for the women are rather ill-looking, but then their standard of beauty may not be ours. If a married woman forgets her vows, no divorce court or any of these civilised arrangements for her.

She and her companion are taken on the spot to the middle of the town close to the temple—the talking-place,—each man brings his club, the outraged husband leading, and the guilty ones die together, and are cooked and eaten in due course. This procedure is the more extraordinary, as in the neighbouring island of Santo the wives are under no such restraint. The men have seldom more than two wives, often only one. Once I found myself close to the temple in one of these Malicolo towns. I waded, before I was well aware of it, into a pool of wet blood just covered over with ashes. The two black boatmen with me bolted instanter. On asking for particulars I was quietly informed an unfaithful wife had just been killed and was being cooked; the man had escaped, but it was all right, they would have him in a day or two. Later on the chief and self strolling about met the guilty one, arrow on string. The chief begged me, his white friend, to shoot and settle the business, and on my declining tried to snatch the gun. This he failed in and he went off in a sulk. I

then went up and told the young fellow to come in the boat and we would save him, and although he came to the bows, he shook his head and would not come on. We went to sea an hour after, and on being driven back two days later by bad weather, the first man we met was the chief, who told us, with an air, he had caught the young fellow asleep, and had clubbed him, and he was cooked in the town; *would we like any?* This was at Ur island, south coast.

On this Southern Malicolo it is thought the acme of beauty to have the head pointed something like a cone of loaf sugar. To obtain this desirable end the heads of the children soon after birth are tightly bound round with *sinnet* (coir twine) from the eyebrows to the hair, so that growth can only extend upwards. Of course the agony to the poor little unfortunate youngsters is dreadful and continuous; for about two years this bandage is only removed occasionally. Many die under such treatment; but what will not people do, gentle or savage, for the great god Fashion? One never sees

these poor little sufferers but he longs to slip out his knife and cut the cruel *sinnet*, the look of dumb pain in the poor little innocent's eyes positively haunts one for hours. Would it not bother a phrenologist if he had to examine and describe character from a lot of Malicolo heads?

A few of these heads can be obtained by purchase, but an odd rule is observed in doing so. No one has the power to sell, but a direct descendant of the person whose head you propose to buy, and I have purchased from a baby in arms. Of course the relatives collared the plunder.

The customs connected with marriage, &c., among these people are, to say the least, peculiar. If a wife bear two female children in succession she is condemned to death, fattened up, *killed and eaten.* Two or three boys, or young girls, are told off to look after her; she is never a moment alone, day or night, for fear of suicide, good food is given her, and when asleep some day the end comes. What a fearful prospect for these unfortunates; what misery they must endure day after day,

week in and week out! Some try to die by refusing all food. I tried more than once my good offices to save the victim, yet ever in vain. What can one do against a whole village? Some strong-minded female, earnest on the rights of the new woman, has a large field for her powers in South Malicolo. Let her try.

Once I was asked by the chief of the small island of Linure to come ashore and see some pigs. We went. Eight large pigs were tied in the bush, with the tusks on each side of the lower jaw forming almost a circle. These tusks are used as wristlets, and keep the string of the bow when used from cutting the flesh of the arm, and when large, white, and perfectly circular, are highly prized. In fact they would make a nice ornament for a lady's arm. Some assert that the pigs that produce these circular tusks are a peculiar breed; indeed, if I mistake not, Wallace, who saw similar swine in the Malay Archipelago, states so. There may be a peculiar breed there, but not in the South Seas. When the male is very young the upper tusk is pulled out, and the under one,

having nothing to grind against, grows in this peculiar manner, sometimes even causing the death of the animal by the point of the tusk growing into the head. But to return. The pigs were pronounced prime, and then it was told they formed the price of the chief's daughter, a little girl of twelve or so, who was running about us in happy ignorance of her fate and sale. Arriving in the town the father sat down, called his little daughter to him, suddenly caught her between his knees, held her head back, while another old fellow put a stone in her mouth, and the two upper front teeth were broken at the gums in a minute by the father striking them with another stone, and the screaming child was handed over to her husband, who now appeared, and who coolly threw her over his shoulder and walked off on his "bridal tour," the last seen of the bride being her kicking legs as the pair disappeared in the bush. I had no rice or old shoes to throw after, while the villagers set to feed on a fat porker, which formed the marriage feast.

A sort of cloth is made by these folk from the webs of a spider. It is remarkably strong, considering the material, and is made into small bags for keeping arrow-heads, tobacco, and even the dried poison that is used for these people's arrows. The pipes, &c., are often carried in the ears of their owners, which are slit. The ears are also used for holding various small articles, from a knife downwards to a bone needle. The people are very superstitious, and the priests have much power, and we found it very convenient to be on good terms with them, a pipe and tobacco as an occasional present tending towards that end. Half the natives one meets here talk Fijian; in fact this is the rule almost everywhere. When a boy returns after completing his three years' work his brothers and sisters pick up the language quickly. Many of the words are similar, as "spirit," "water," "cocoanuts," and many more.

Hideous masks are worn in their secret masonic rites, initiations and circumcision of boys, religious dances, &c., the entrance fees, &c.,

consisting of more or less pigs. These ceremonial articles (not the pigs) are kept in the temple when not in use, where they remain hidden from the women and children.

Off the small island of Na Kamba (*i.e.*, fire) once we were becalmed, and some of us pushed on in the boat to the island. We were pressed to anchor, but said we had no wind to come in. Two priests at once proceeded to call up a breeze by burning cocoanuts, I suppose to the "*manes*" of their fathers, dead priests probably. Shortly afterwards a breeze *did* spring up, when the two worthies were triumphant, and demanded and got payment for their labours. Probably the cunning fellows by the local appearance of the sky knew a breeze was impending, and acted accordingly.

Other persons besides savages pray for rain, and many good folk consider it the proper thing to do.

The name for chief round this south coast is *Rokovun*. Now *roko* is the word used for respect in Fiji, and in certain cases is prefixed to their rank by chiefs as a title—thus : *Roko*

Tui Viva, for instance—the chief of Viva. The title seems to have had something of a religious heathen origin connected with the priesthood in the latter islands. The word *nitu* (a ghost) is also the same in both groups, as also in the Solomons.

Some years ago a boatload of whites made the south coast of this island from their wrecked vessel. They got ashore at Malip Bay. The natives were equal to the occasion. They made a large pen of tall cocoanut-trees in the middle of the village, put the whites in it, and tried to fatten them up preparatory to a feast. The poor sailors under this treatment got fever and ague, and daily their captors came to feel them and to find out how the fattening got on, and were much disappointed at the poor whites getting thinner and thinner. Eventually a British man-of-war purchased the whole boat's crew, man by man, from the natives, for a long knife and tomahawk each. These people are economists of the first rank, and do not believe in wasting good food.

For all that, they are kind after a fashion,

very fond of their children, and attentive to their sick, and give anything they have to a friend, tribesman, or relative. Some ten or fifteen years ago Ross Lewin, a well-known South Sea trader, landed with a hundred Tanna men, fully armed, on the south coast of this island, and marched through it to the north end. It took him five days. He threw up a sort of earthwork every evening to camp in. The tribes sunk all their petty disputes and joined to fight him, and he had every evening to give battle. But discipline and firearms told, and he each time drove off the natives. He went to look for forests of sandal-wood (which exist in the neighbouring island of Santo). This wood was then a considerable article of trade with China. However, it was not told he found any.

The language of these people is very different from that of their nearest island neighbours—as different as their customs are. Many dialects are in use, but they resemble one another more or less, many words being used in common.

I went about ten or twelve miles inland with the Linure tribe, and saw little change in the country; with the exception of Ross Lewin I know of only one other white having done so, —before or since. This was the mate of the *Dauntless*, who went by himself—he never came back. On the east coast the French sent an expedition some six miles inland, they then had to return and fight their way home.

The people round this south coast are generally honest in their dealings and trade fairly with one, but are stupid. I suppose if our heads were made to grow as a cone we would not be very bright either. This head-pressing is continued until one arrives at South-West Bay. The natives are very treacherous there, and dangerous to deal with, but then this bay is much frequented by French vessels. Moral: Beware of natives who have much dealings with the French, *they are never to be trusted;* why I am sure I can't say, it is a fact, however.

Above South-West Bay, towards the north and north-west, the people have had no inter-

course with strangers, are very wild, and generally decline to come near the boats.

A famine prevailed when we were there, and we gave many yams away to them; still they would make no freedom with us, although they lived on "*yaka*," a wild root that requires chewing for hours before it can be eaten. They had no article of European manufacture among them. The coast-line is full of beautiful little land-locked harbours, but is, or perhaps rather was, uncharted. The people play continually on some large trumpet, probably a sea shell—we could not see one—which sounds like the wailings of many persons together.

One large tribe had to pass along the seashore between the cliffs and the boats. After long hesitation they placed the women and children in the centre, the men forming front and rear guards, and so passed us. At another place they came down as we wooded and watered ship, and shook their spears at us for hours. As we did not appear to mind this, they put up a banana stump as a mark, and at about fifty yards away every man drove his

spear through it. Then we started to show off. One of us stepped out, put up a thin white stone the size of a dinner-plate at a hundred yards or so away, and hit it four or five times in succession with a Winchester, finally breaking it. The effect was surprising. Forgetting all fear, the whole of the warriors rushed up to the mark, examined each fragment of the stone carefully, and finally put the bits in their bags. They seemed never to have seen firearms used before. This little exhibition seemed to knock all the fight out of them. I managed to get the young daughter of the chief near enough to give her a looking-glass, the size of a penny. Yell upon yell of surprise followed, and curiosity became so excited that the whole tribe of women chased her to see the wonder, but she was as active as a young roe, and got away from them. At last the chief, digging his spear in the sand, advanced alone unarmed, and one of us, also sticking the stock of his rifle in the sand, went forward and met him, and ended by painting his face red and blue. On the chief's return to his party

the excitement became great ; the women could resist no longer, and soon the captain was busy painting them all. Next day the tribe came without flourishing their spears, and helped us to roll our casks down the stream and into the sea, and we paid in red and blue paint. These people had one small axelet of European manufacture, evidently very old, it was so quaintly made. I would like to know the history of that tiny axe. I did all I could to buy it—unsuccessfully—offered one twice as big. This tribe did not know the use of tobacco, and many ran off when they saw some of us smoking. Well, we were a full ship, and only wanted water and wood, and so we left next morning, to the tribe's grief. I gave the ladies a little looking-glass each, the captain distributed beads ; calico was held in much contempt ; and the rubbing of noses *was awful*—I know mine was sore for a week.

The cone-shaped head and the use of the bow and arrow become rarer and rarer as one goes northward—these things seem to go together—and finally on the north coast neither

is seen. These facts seem to point to separate immigrations in the far past. The great obstacle to white occupation of this very fertile island, is fever and ague. The soil is the very best, and will grow anything, but these thick, impenetrable forest glades, through which the sun never shines, so dense is the foliage, are very hotbeds of malaria, and one night on shore means (to the white) fever and ague in the morning. Even the pigs suffer from it; yet if the land was once cleared to the light of heaven, and kept so this fell disease would disappear; it does so in other places, why not here? Eventually our hardy pioneers will try it—and succeed; but not the French; to them is not given the dogged determination of the Anglo-Saxon.

Two or three years ago a man named Cullen, usually called "Brocky Peter," and a German, settled as traders at Linure. After some time the natives, it was supposed incited by the hope of plunder, one night attacked the whites, the store was fired, the German bolted out and was clubbed, but Cullen was burned alive

—fighting to the last, at least so the natives said, when asked by my informant, who found the burnt remains of house and man. The German was not found—probably had been eaten. Personally I must say I found these Linure folk very kind and friendly to me. I shot over their little island many times, and they were always very obliging and civil—but then—I was the friend of the tribe.

The matter of these murders was reported to the authorities. The English High Commissioner simply did nothing—the men were only common traders, and had perhaps ill-treated the poor natives. Not so the Germans. Their man-of-war came, and anchored in Lemus Bay close to Linure, which had been deserted at first sight of the vessel. After a day or two the natives, emboldened by the apparent inaction of the warship, lined the beach in hundreds, and fired at (with muskets) and challenged the vessel for hours. After being frequently struck, the German manned her Gatlings in the tops, and fired a couple of volleys. No

more was needed, the long beach was strewn with dead and wounded, and the great warship steamed away at once. "Awfully cruel! Barbarous! Worthy of the Middle Ages!" some will cry out, forgetting the whites burnt and eaten. For the next twenty years a white's life will be safe for fifty miles along this coast, and the story of the German action will circulate from island to island among the natives in New Hebrides and Solomons. It is astonishing how quickly news travels in these South Seas, and perhaps this may save the life of many a white.

One has often felt his blood boil when some Englishman would come on board and beg earnestly of one not to mention to the natives his nationality, and to hear some broken-down jack-tar jabber broken phrases of French to the natives, or talk through his nose as a Yankee to them. It is worse than a crime to be an Englishman all over the vast expanse of the great South Seas. *I have seen it, I know it, and the above is no exaggeration.*

The Captains Macdonalds, brothers, were Canadians, they told me so; they always traded and sailed under the American flag—to save their lives, they said. The well-known Captain McCloud was a "blue nose," yet his vessels all carried "the Stars and Stripes," or the French flag latterly. Such a policy (so un-English and suicidal) is enough to make our forefathers, Drake, Anson, Frobisher, Raleigh, rise from their graves and repudiate us. We outsiders, on the bounds of the empire, stand amazed and aghast at a great nation with such a glorious record tolerating it for a moment. Some good folk among us ask how the French, Germans, and Americans have obtained such a footing in the Western Pacific of late years, and I answer—

These nations protect their individual subjects—if they deserve it. *The English do not.* There is the reason in a nutshell.

A WILD CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE SOUTH SEAS

"For some got shot and some got drowned,
And some beyond the seas
Got scraped to death with oyster-shells
In the New Hebrides."

THE old *M—— R——*, a topsail schooner of eighty tons or so, was a most unlucky vessel, and had a most sinister reputation. She was found originally years ago drifting about the Solomon group—a derelict, as the seamen say, without a soul on board—books, logs, compass, and everything movable all gone, but otherwise in good condition enough. A trader got her from the Solomon tribe, that had secured her for a box of Barrett's twist tobacco. Most probably her crew had been surprised, killed, and eaten by the wild man-eaters of these parts, where human flesh is a

staple bill of fare in this year of our Lord 1898.

Yet a second time was this schooner found drifting about in the neighbourhood of Fiji, with three natives only on board her, who would not, or could not, give any account of themselves. The vessel's log showed she had last anchored off Cherry Island, and from that out nothing was known of the fate of her captain, officers, and crew.

Talking of Cherry Island, 'tis a South Sea puzzle, a lone, small island in the Western Pacific half-way between the New Hebrides group and that of Santa Cruz, surrounded on all sides by the dark-skinned, woolly-headed Pacific negro race. These Cherry Islanders are among the lightest-skinned people in the South Seas; they are the colour of Spaniards, and physically the perfection of man and womanhood, all the men I saw being over six feet. They are also very brave as well as treacherous. Who they are, or where they came from originally, no one seems to know. Looking at these people as they throng and

sport over your vessel, the fact is irresistibly borne in on your mind that they have European blood—the Caucasian type. Are they the descendants of the Spaniards — of some of that brave band led by the heroic Torres, who actually formed settlements at Santo, a New Hebrides island about 200 miles off perhaps, some three centuries ago, or of the buccaneers, traditions of whose presence in the Solomon group are still preserved? It is reported, and only reported, that no traces of European words exist in the island language. Be that as it may, the people themselves have no traditions, or, more probably, refuse to tell them. I have asked personally, without a result. Whites who have lived on their island are scarce—like Jim Bludso.

> "Wal, no; I can't tell where they lives,
> Because they don't live, you see!
> Leastways, they've got out of the habit of living
> Like you and me."

On the other hand, these people are not cannibals, as the natives on the islands round

them are. Altogether, Cherry Island and its handsome inhabitants are a mystery—a South Sea enigma. But to return to our yarn. Even a third time did this luckless vessel lose all her crew—this time, it was known, by massacre.

As you may guess, my feelings were not very lively when I found myself on board such an old tub of a craft, more especially when my friends (even a Government agent has a few friends) came off to bid me a final goodbye, as most of them candidly assured me (such was the bad odour of the vessel) they never expected to see me again. Only for very shame's sake I would have left her then and there; and it took all my philosophy and the reflection that, after all, it was not the fault of the old vessel, that she met so many and frequent mishaps, to make me hold my ground.

Besides all this, after we were at sea a few days I began to find out that our captain was, to say the least of it, eccentric. Sailors call a spade a spade as a rule, and they used only

a word of one syllable when speaking of the captain and his vagaries. Seamen, like all persons who carry their lives in their hands, are superstitious; and dire were the dismal forebodings of officers and men at our ill-fated schooner and her extraordinary captain. The latter soon gave us a touch of his quality in this wise. We wanted wood and water, so anchored at Big Bay, North Santo, at the mouth of the Jordan (or Ororo, as the natives call it). This river is about the size of the Yarra, or perhaps a little less.

By the way, some six or seven miles up this stream is the very place where the Spaniards made a settlement some time in the sixteenth century; the crumbling walls of their forts can yet be seen. They must have dealt by the natives with a heavy hand, as at present the whole neighbourhood is strict "*tambu*." No native will approach within a mile of the old forts, and the locality is given over to ghosts and hobgoblins of the first water and weirdest power. So say the "boys." As in Ireland, every male under forty is a "boy" hereabouts.

Well, we anchored off the mouth of the Jordan in the evening, with a lowering sky, and blowing half a gale on a lee shore; heavy breakers rolled on the sands, and where the strong current of the river met the wind and tide they assumed a larger size; however, in the morning we hoped the wind would fall, and the sea go down.

But at daylight the lookout was much the same. One of the officers had just said, "No wood or water this day," when the captain came on deck, and the order rang out sharp and clear in the morning air, "Lower away port and starboard boats for wood and water." Had a bomb fallen amongst us we could not have been more surprised. But a captain on board his own vessel is supreme, and slowly the hands began to make ready. Now, it was part of my duties to accompany the boats when leaving the vessel for any purpose. However, I was so taken by surprise at the order just given, I had not moved from the waist of the vessel, where I had been standing, when I heard the captain's voice say, "Now, Mr.

Government agent, the boats will leave in ten minutes." Both the mates now came up, and whisperingly urged me to remonstrate with the captain, as no boat could live in the mighty billows on the river bar. This I refused to do ; it was their business, not mine ; but they had no stomach for it either. The captain evidently expected some such request, as he watched us critically, with the cunning of an eccentric. He only wanted some such action on our parts, so as to enable him to sneer for a week afterwards, and hint we were afraid, not game, and so on.

We were all fair swimmers and accustomed to boat work, so I said to the mates it would be only an upset and a swim, and the only danger was the chance of sharks.

"And a very likely chance, too," muttered our burly first mate.

So we agreed to risk it, and I went to my cabin to get ready. Now, usually the getting ready consisted in donning a heavy revolver and Martini rifle, ammunition and trade bag, as generally no one thinks of going anywhere in

the South Seas unarmed; but on this occasion off went boots, trousers, shirt, and in the Adam-like dress of two yards of calico, a hat and belt, I hastened to take my place in the boat. As I passed, the captain said, "What, going ashore without arms, and in that rig?"

"Oh! I am not going ashore, captain, only for an upset and a swim"; and so with a "Give way there," off we started.

Just before this, however, one of the native boat's crew backed out, said he could not swim well, and so my own Oba boy, who swam like an otter, and pulled a good oar, took his place.

The first mate, in whose boat I sat, was dressed, or rather undressed, in much the same style as your humble servant—beauty unadorned is adorned the most, you know. The river's mouth was scarce three hundred yards off.

The boat of the first mate prepared to lead; the Sniders of the crew were lashed under the thwarts. Another of the men here lost his nerve, and got the shakes, a Tanna man at

that, so I had to take his oar. Now is our time; the last huge breaker is spending its force on the bar, another gathers behind us. "Give way there; all together," yells the first mate, as he stands "square on," holding with steady hand and set face his huge steer oar. The swift whaleboat, like a gull to its prey, dashes at the bar, the great roller surges up behind; we all pull like demons; the boat is lifted up behind almost perpendicularly; a roar in our ears—and—whew—we are in the still water of the river, filled to the brim, but not upset. The strong, skilful hand of our boat steerer had kept her "end on" through it all, but our four stout ash oars had snapped like pen-handles. The second boat prepared to shoot Niagara now, but something went wrong with her, some one quailed at the wrong moment; for an instant she lay broadside on the crest of the vast roller like a cockle-shell, and the next over, and over, and over she rolled, boatmen and oars all mingled together on the top of the great wave on the bar. We swam out and helped our comrades in. The

second mate looked so comical mounted astride on the keel of his upturned boat; this, together with the released tension of nerve and muscle, set us off, and they heard us laughing on the ship. The "boys" dived inside the bar and got the rifles, which had not been tied on in the other boat; one of her oars only was broken.

The natives then came down. Some of us knew them, fortunately, and they turned out to be in good-humour and were very friendly; one fellow even offering in the excess of his friendship our disrobed first mate the only garment he wore—a dirty shirt.

After some hours the tide made, the water became deeper at the bar, and the breakers not so large in consequence. It is much easier and less dangerous to go out against an ocean roller than to come in on it. The reader may ask how two boats got out with only three oars. Easily; sailors are full of resource. The second mate's boat went first, and when outside the troubled water used the blades of the broken oars as paddles, and threw the oars on

the bar, when of course they floated in to us, and so we followed.

After this, I need hardly say, the relations between the captain and his officers did not improve, and after some little time they did not speak to each other, except about duty, and I stuck pretty well to my books and cabin.

Christmas drew on apace, and matters did not seem to mend with us, so at last, late on Christmas Eve, we anchored at a large bay on the lee coast of Pentecost Island, New Hebrides, known by the too suggestive title of "Murderers," or Bat-nap-ne Bay.

The tribe who frequented this bay was known as one of the most treacherous in the New Hebrides; their chief, Tavi-se-se, was a bloodthirsty, man-eating savage. Only a few months before, the mate of the *May Queen* had been tomahawked by this cannibal brute as the man stooped in his boat's stern to get from the trade box a present of tobacco for the treacherous chief. A British man-of-war, for a wonder, undertook to avenge this wanton murder, but Tavi-se-se was equal to the occa-

sion. The mate of a merchant vessel agreed to act as guide to the town for the armed party from the war vessel, but was shot dead in the narrow track by a concealed savage. Without a guide in the thick scrub the bluejackets had simply to return as they came. Such was the state of affairs on our arrival.

We lay two miles or so off from the land, which we could hardly make out through the mist, rain, and gathering darkness, riding uneasily to both anchors, one the best bower. The gusty and rising wind offshore blew shrilly and yet more shrill through our standing rigging; the captain was as glum as the ship's figurehead—not a pleasant Christmas by any means; but we hoped better things in the morning. But no, the outlook was much the same as on the previous night; occasionally we saw the land through a rift in the rain-clouds, and that was about all. At this juncture we were all electrified by hearing the captain ordering boats to be lowered for recruiting. The mates stared at each other in blank dismay, and again

pressed me to interfere. "What!" they whispered; "a boat can barely live in such a sea, she is liable to be swamped at any moment, and the Man-bo-hur tribe will certainly eat us if they can catch us—'tis rank madness." Still I refused to speak to the captain. Then one of us thought of a little circular boat cove at the southern end of the big bay; there the boats could be sheltered from every gust. Two or three large caves were there also, where we could all get under cover from the storm. This was all told in a few words, and we agreed to spend our Christmas there. I was to delay getting ready as much as possible, while one of the mates made love to the doctor (as the ship's cook is generally called) for any Christmas fare he had; and so all hands made ready to lower with great apparent zeal, and I went to my cabin to prepare also. The captain appeared puzzled (as well he might) at our readiness; he knew nothing of the little boat bay and the caves. I don't know if ever I remember feeling a reluctance to face danger before; however, I felt it on this occasion

Christmas had ever been an unlucky time for me and mine. The sinister reputation of the people also, the half gale blowing without, all together made me feel strangely reluctant to get ready. I had a sort of presentiment even that I would not return. Reader, have you ever felt such presentiments? If so, you know what a strong hold they take of a fellow. So strong was the feeling on this occasion that I made my will, called the captain down to the cabin to witness it (giving the cook and mate a chance), and coolly told him to give it to the proper authorities if I did not return. This seemed rather to stagger him, but he said nothing—and so to the boat.

I don't remember to have encountered before such an angry wind and sea as the boats met when we drew clear of the ship. We only showed the merest fragment of a sail, and just lay our course almost close-hauled, one holding the sheet (no belaying now), while the other steered; one of the boat's crew continually baling, as we shipped seas every minute, notwithstanding all the skill of the mate at the big

steer oar. We tore through the water, and in a minute or two lost sight of the ship in the fierce spume of the gale.

As luck would have it, we just made our little cove, and in a very short time the boats were resting peacefully in its comparatively calm waters. The caves were explored, and found just the thing we wanted. It was settled that yours truly, as knowing the people best, should open communications with the natives, avoiding carefully the Man-bo-hur tribe, and Tavi-se-se. Very carefully indeed I went to work; hatless, coatless, and bootless, with nothing on but brown-coloured shirt and trousers, revolver on hip and rifle in hand I stole through the narrow forest track, while the gale rattled overhead among the trees. After a couple of miles of this sort of work, I heard some one singing, native fashion, at the top of the voice. Executing a careful stalk, I was delighted to find I knew the singer; he belonged to another tribe, the foes of the Man-bo-hurites; we had met in other climes, and were old friends. After a rubbing of

noses (native fashion), and a shaking of hands (white fashion), I told him it was Christmas-time with us, and we wanted two or three young pigs and half a dozen fowls, and would pay handsomely. He had seen Christmas among the whites aforetime, and was delighted —swore he would bring down the whole tribe to the caves, and *kava*, pigs, and fowl; and he was as good as his word, for in an hour or two afterwards the whole tribe were down on us—men, women, and children, in all 300 or 400 wild savages, led by my singing friend. Then began the fun; the pigs smoked on their funeral pyres, the fowls paid the debt of nature, the great *kava*-bowls were brought out, and the grog root of the South Seas pounded up on stones by the lads and lasses. They pound and don't chew it in this part of the world; the latter process obtains, though, on many of the other islands. We were old South Seaites, and could drink and enjoy our *kava* with any one. The ship's cook was generous—preserved meat *ad lib.*, a huge duff, tea made in the boat's baling buckets, and even a solitary repre-

sentative of the juice of the juniper berry graced the board, or rather sands of the cave, flanked on each side by roast pig whole ; and so we feasted, and our sable friends also, the women and children enjoying thoroughly their first taste of hot sweet tea and ship's biscuits, and then we pledged one another in flowing bowls of *kava*—the cup that cheers but does not inebriate—each man as he raised the half cocoanut shell brimming to his lips yelling out his toast at the top of his voice, after the island manner. One of our fellows played the accordion, and "Rule Britannia" and "Britons never shall be Slaves," and rattling choruses that sailors love, made the roof of the old cave ring again. Then two hundred warriors sprang up and danced the war-dance and chanted the war-song of the tribe, dressed in their best, with red and blue paint, which cannot be described better than in the words of the inimitable "Bishop" of "Rum-ti-foo"—

> "Except a shell—a bangle rare,
> A feather here, a feather there,
> The South Pacific negroes wear
> Their native nothingness."

Savage guards of the tribe watched without, rifle in hand, for the coming of the Tavi-se-se, but he came not. Then our Scotchman, fired at the sight of dancing, gave us the sword-dance of his country, with long knives instead of swords, amidst loud plaudits. The matrons of the tribe gave next a stately sort of minuet, and then our Irishman, primed with sundry huge bowls of *kava*, sprang to the front with revolver in belt and with loaded Snider, used shillelagh fashion, danced jigs and reels galore, to the delight of the natives. The storm yelled without, the people yelled within. The girls danced and sang, then the boys; then a dusky beauty, "clothed in innocence," a dark Lady Godiva, was persuaded to try a polka with one of us, then a waltz, to the extravagant amusement of the whole lot. During an eventful life I have spent a few queer Christmas days, but never a wilder one than this. Three hundred wild cannibals, of all ages, sizes, and sexes, innocent of clothes, dancing in the half gloom of a great cavern, amidst the ruddy gleam of the fires, the winds howling and

wailing without, formed altogether such a weird, wild, and extraordinary scene of movement and excitement as it has been the lot of few to see and take part in. And so the evening drew on apace and the gale began to blow itself out, and as the sun set we returned to our boats. Every native got a pipe and fig of tobacco, even to the baby in arms, and amid many nose rubbings, not to mention sundry smellings and snufflings (the natives' most endearing caress), we started, the boom of the ship's gun sounding in our ears, and, guided by the vessel's lights, got on board some time after dark, all pledged to secrecy.

"What delayed you?" (this from the captain.) "Waited for the breeze to go down," we answered; and so ended the wildest Christmas it was ever the writer's lot to spend. What's that you say? Oh! What happened to the old hulk? Well, we got ashore five times before we got to port, and as the hardy sailors sprang ashore to be paid off they swore by all their gods they would never set foot in the old *M*—— *R*—— again, with her cranky

captain. After our trip she was fitted out for a trading cruise, new chums were shipped, and—*she never came back.* Years after, down New Georgia way, in one of the wildest parts of the Solomons, I met a man who knew the vessel. Three days' sail by canoe from where we were, at a yet more wild and barbarous island, where trader never anchors but to be taken, the unlucky vessel anchored—that anchor was never tripped again. Stay-at-homes may say that nowadays a large vessel may anchor anywhere; by no means. There are hundreds of places in the wild Solomons, no matter what the size of the vessel may be (unless indeed a man-of-war), where to anchor for the night is to die. So it was in this case. Under cover of the darkness the cannibals came down in their thousands, the crew slept—whether asleep or awake it was equal. After anchoring her doom was sealed—another massacre—another vessel burned—another cannibal feast; such was the fate of the unfortunate *M—— R——*. *Voilá tout.*

To be eaten is mostly the ultimate fate of

many of the hardy white adventurers in the western South Seas ; such is the final result, if the trader remains long enough. It may be postponed for years, or it may happen at once ; but the result is generally certain, sooner or later. Every one who goes down to these seas in ships has to face this almost certain probability. I don't think "ye that stay at home at ease" realise all this. I can assure you the feeling is to many minds most repugnant. A century or so ago the whole of sea-going Europe was kept in a continual state of terror by a few pirates from the coast of Algiers ; the old writers are full of the horrors of white slavery among the Moors, and the daring of the Sallee Rovers, as they were called. Not a merchant sailed the Mediterranean but before he started made his will and settled his affairs. We almost fail to realise this state of matters nowadays. Similarly, a century hence our children's children will look with surprise and incredulity at a phase of thought that considered the cutting down of a few cocoanut-trees, the burning of a few grass huts, the breaking of a

few canoes, and finally the payment of a few pigs, as sufficient punishment for the taking of British vessels and the blood of British seamen. A great public speaker at home a few months ago ascribed to the English of to-day a certain soft-heartedness and womanishness, if I may use the term; and I imagine few will gainsay him in this part of the world. If the bold spirits of our fathers, the shades of Drake, Raleigh, Anson, Cook, can look down on us from their places, what must they think of their descendants, who consider a few pigs an equivalent for the lives of British seamen? But enough of this. I may add that the above incidents are true, and as correct in their details as I can make them. I am conscious my pen has failed adequately to describe the wild scenes I passed through then, but I can only wish my readers as merry a Christmas as that spent by me some few years ago in the sunny, lotus-eating South Seas.

A FEAST AND A FAMINE

"Or to burst all links of habit,
There to wander far away;
On from island unto island,
At the gateways of the day."

TENNYSON.

THAT nobleness of conduct, generosity, and fair play may characterise the dark-skinned Fijian, as well as the white Anglo-Saxon, the following story may in some measure go to prove—

One day, some years ago, a high chief on Vanua Levu (in the big land), the second largest island of the Fijian group, invited me to go to a "*So-Levu*" (big feast) in his town, some eighty miles off, where perhaps a thousand natives would gorge themselves with pig, and dance and feast, and dance again, and drink *kava* for a week.

"They eat, and drink, and sleep. What then?
They eat and drink and sleep again."

Now at that time Vanua Levu was not very quiet ; and as the chief had power, it was not advisable to disappoint him. Besides, it was reported that five or six turtle were to be killed, shell turtle at that ; and this meant so many head of shell, worth at that time 20s. a pound. A head consists of the thirteen plates of tortoise-shell forming the outward shell of the hawksbill (the green turtle's shell being of little or no value) weighing from three to four or even five pounds each.

So the big trade box went on board the large whaleboat, and three or four boys of the crew jumped on her, highly delighted at the prospect of the dance, and a big meat feed. As they confided to me, they were badly *ingusima*, that is, the longing to eat animal food—a real disease among all South Sea folk—have I not experienced it myself?—after months of nothing but a vegetable diet, when one cannot sleep without dreaming of great feasts of flesh—such is ever the beginning and ending of one's dreams when—*ingusima*. It has often struck me that the reason these natives were such

cannibals in the past was because of this intense longing for animal food—they simply could not do without it. Before Captain Cook brought pigs to the South Seas this disease could only be dealt with in one way. As no other flesh or fat (as the cocoanut is comparatively recent in the South Seas) was available, they ate one another, and so probably arose cannibalism—possibly prehistoric. Even our own forbears were not exempt, for was there not a human bone, showing marks of human teeth, mined up not so long ago from some preadamite kitchen "*midden*" near Edinburgh? It may be considered a South Sea axiom that, given, let us say, fifty English women, well educated, fed on plenty of other good food, but no meat or fat of any sort available, and within six months they would revert to cannibalism. No one could doubt this who has once suffered from *ingusima*.

But to resume. The chief came to the water's edge to welcome his white friend, and even went so far as to kiss. As my lady readers may perhaps be interested in hearing what a Fijian kiss is like I will explain—arms are

thrown round you and you are then smelt at four or five times, generally close to the shoulder, a good healthy snuffle being given each time. This is the Fijian's most endearing caress. The meeting of lip to lip—white fashion—being much disliked; perhaps they think it also unscientific—an unhallowed mixture of microbes! Do the natives feel any pleasure in this smelling? See a mother take her boy, returning home from a year's work say, in her arms and smell him for an hour, and you would doubt no longer. In fact, we of the white race have partially lost the sense of smell and its pleasures, which the Polynesian and the aboriginal yet retain. After this the chief and myself stroll up to his brown, cool, and comfortable grass house for the usual drink of *kava* described elsewhere. As we drink he tells me the "*so-levu*" is full, and now that his white brother chief has come he will order the twenty pigs and five turtle which had been cooking these twelve hours in the great earth ovens, to be divided. The "food divider" is summoned, and my Joseph's share turns out to

be some five hundredweight of cooked yams and taro, a small pig, and some turtle, besides puddings and sugar-cane. These the boat boys cart off in great glee, and we feast in true Homeric fashion until nature could stand no more. Then up jumped some two hundred young fellows, who danced the great war dance of the tribe, club in hand, and chanting their wild war song; and when the boys had finished the lasses sprang up in their turn, and danced the dance of the inflowing tide, and very pretty and poetical it was—tiny mites with white tapa garlands to represent the little wavelets rippling on the beach in the foreground, while the older and taller girls at the back were supposed to form the crest of the wave, all imitating in a droning monotone the noise of the waves rolling in on the shore, and so advancing, then retreating, yet ever approaching, as the incoming tide—

"Where the sea eggs flame on the coral, and the long-backed breakers croon
Their endless ocean legends to the lazy, locked lagoon."

Other dances followed, the chief and white

burning the arms of the more graceful girl-dancers with the ends of their lighted cigarettes. This is considered the gentlemanly and "chiefly" thing to do, and "after the ball" are not the dancers proud of their burns? "Oh, I have ten marks on my arm," says one, and then the rival, "Oh, but our white man burnt me, and the chief did so too," and so on. I have seen a girl cry with vexation after a dance, because some wandering white forgot to burn her.

Then came a shout for the white man to dance. I tried to get out of it on the score of no partner. "Choose among them all," said the chief, and so a dusky belle was chosen, clad in innocence, oil and flowers, mostly, and the astonished natives saw a waltz for the first time in their lives. But, "Oh, how improper!" (in the South Seas the sexes dance apart always), "hardly decent! Do men and women dance together among the whites like that? Do the chiefs? Does the Queen?" "Oh yes," was the answer to all these queries. "Sombo! Sombo!" (exclamations of as-

tonishment followed). "How extraordinary!" "How very awful!"

Well, two or three days of this sort of thing (for the dancing is continuous) were enough for any white; and having bought all the tortoise-shell, I ordered my boys to prepare to sail. "Oh, they were only just beginning to enjoy themselves. Let their white chief be good-minded, and let them remain; there were four salt-water people who wished to go up north also, and would be glad to help sail the boat, and when the '*So*' is over we can return overland. Ah, do let us," said the boys. They were good lads, so I agreed; but "where," I asked, "are the folks who wish to come with me?" They stood out, two young fellows of twenty-two and twenty, and two girls about eighteen and fifteen. "Are you willing to sail with me?" *Eu saka* ("Yes, sir"). "Are you salt-water people?" "Yes." "What pay do you want?" "Only our passages and a *sulu* (fathom of calico) each." "What relationship between you?" "Little brothers and sisters" (*i.e.*, first cousins). "Who is to

cook?" "The younger girl." "It is good; let it be so," I answer. "Be ready to-morrow two hours after sunrise; put plenty of food on board from that heap of mine yonder, little one, and fill the water-cask" (*Vinaka saka*). "'Tis good, sir," and so I went off to the evening *kava* drink with the chiefs.

Next morning the chiefs and friends came to the boat to say goodbye, and after half an hour's smelling and snuffling I managed to get away, and sprang on board. "Have you plenty of food, water, and firewood in the boat, little cook?" "Yes, chief." "Then up with the mainsail, lift anchor—up jib," and we move off, to find when we got out of the little bay a head wind blowing. Well, there was nothing else for it but a dead beat against a muzzler. After a few hours of this the oldest lad spoke up, "Why not hold out to sea, chief, all day? for after sunset the wind will blow from the sea, and then, having sea-room, we can sail up the coast, and will be home to-morrow night." "Are you sure, youngster, of this?" I ask. "Oh yes, we are men of

the salt water, and we know the wind always does so at this moon."

After this we held out to sea until the land showed blue in the distance as the sun set; but all night the wind changed not at all, and we tacked every two hours as we took watch and watch about, the Fijian women taking their share of the work, which they did as well as the men.

Next morning at daybreak I roused the girl to cook the breakfast. She came aft half an hour afterwards to tell me there were no yams left. "Did I not order you to put food on board?" I said, "and did you not say you did, you untruthful child?"—she was little more. "I forgot it, oh, white chief, and I lied to hide my forgetfulness," answered the girl. Here was a pretty go! twenty or twenty-five miles from land and no food left but a little tea and sugar. I roused the rest, and put it to them that I thought it better to return. "Oh no, chief, don't do it," they begged. "In heathen times folks who returned were eaten, and now it is considered a disgrace among us to go

back once a start has been made. Let us endure it, it can be only for a day; the wind will turn to-night, and we will be home to-morrow." So after some further chat this was agreed to, and a billy of tea was made and passed round, along with a spoonful of sugar each.

We beat to nor'ward all day. Night came on again, but the wind changed not a jot. Another cup of tea and spoonful of sugar all round, and an all night's steady beat; next morning tea and sugar only again. Shortly afterwards the hungry ones forward (I was steering) began to quarrel, a rare thing among Fijians, which ended by their coming aft, dragging the poor little cook with them, and the oldest boy spoke thus: "White chief" (the Fijians are divided into chiefs and slaves; the white is not a slave, therefore he must be a chief, *i.e.*, while he acts as such), "I have brought this bad girl aft for you to flog; 'tis all her fault that we are starving, so judge and punish her." On this the whimpering little cook dropped on her knees, saying, "Oh yes, chief, I am a

bad, wicked girl; take your belt and give me twenty. I deserve it." "But among us whites," I objected, "no chief flogs a woman; it can't be done, 'tis not our fashion. If I did it I would cease being a chief. Lad, you are her cousin, do it yourself." "I am no chief," the young fellow said, "and have no power to flog. If I could I would." "Well," I said, "I can't, and I won't, so go forward now and endure it as I do."

An hour afterwards we came to a low sand island. It was absolutely bare of vegetation, and probably covered by the sea at high tides. Here I made up my mind to anchor, and if the wind did not change, to try and make the land by moonlight. At the other end of the little island, half a mile off, was a solitary white crane, and seizing the gun with hungry intent I stalked that wretched bird, for an hour crawling and wriggling over the soft glittering sand, all to no purpose, as he flew before I got within a hundred yards, and I don't know when I felt more disappointed. When I got back the crew were asleep on the sand,

except the cook girl, who, much to my surprise, had a roast yam and five little crabs, each the size of a crown piece, beside her. She pushed them toward me, saying, "Eat, *turanga*" (chief); "your food waits." Where did you get this?" I queried. "In cleaning out the boat we found the yam between the lining boards, and caught the crabs in the sand." So I divided the yam into five bits, taking one and a crab myself, and calling the others to take their share. Now, who would believe it? They one and all refused to touch the food, though they were hardly able to stand for want of it. "'Tis *Vaka viti* (Fiji fashion) for a chief to eat," they said. "We are only commoners, and can endure it."

I insisted white fashion should rule in this matter, but I had to threaten to lash them before they could be induced to take their share: the little cook was peculiarly hard to convince. Now these people could easily have eaten this food behind my back and said nothing, were weak with hunger, and were comparative strangers to me, so that I think

it showed a very unselfish, not to say noble, trait of character on the part of so-called savages. How would the average white act under similar circumstances? Let the reader answer for himself. We all lay down again on the warm sand and slept. An hour afterwards I was roused by the soft clapping of hands—it is considered by these people rude to directly wake a sleeper—and found in the interval the wind had changed at last, and was blowing dead inshore. In five minutes we had weighed anchor, and with sails "goosed" in three hours made the land. We found a village half a mile inshore, but the crew refused to go to it, recognising old heathen foes. I went and sat in the chief's house; food was at once brought, a hospitable rite never omitted by the polite Fijian. What a difficulty I had to eat in a chiefly manner, slowly and ceremoniously, while feeling ravenous enough to have devoured a horse! I was afraid the chief would find out my crew were of a tribe who had been foes to his, but even if he had, food would not have been refused, only

delayed. I felt relieved therefore when an old woman sold me about one hundred pounds of yams and a dozen large crabs for some Turkey red calico. I could not but admire the air of seeming indifference (for the benefit of a few onlookers) which my crew showed for the food, and I had to order them twice to roast the yams and crabs, and then it was done with studied reluctance. When the food was cooked we started for home, and got there next morning.

After a rest the crew said goodbye to me in the usual Fijian way. After they had gone fifty yards or so the little cook threw her parcels down and rushed back, saying, "Oh, my chief and king who would not lash me," and then more smelling and snuffling. Who will throw the stone if I confess I gave good-bye this time in the old English manner? We never met again.

IN THE SOLOMONS

"There dwells a wife by a Northern marsh,
And a wealthy wife is she;
She breeds a breed of roving men,
And casts them over sea.

* * * *

The good wife's son's come home again
With little into their hands
But the war o' men that ha' dealt with men
In the new and naked lands.

But the faith of men that ha' proven men
By more than willing breath,
And the eyes of men that ha' read with men,
In the open books of Death.

Rich are they?—rich in wonders seen,
But poor in the goods o' men,
And what they ha' got, by the skin of their teeth,
They sell for their teeth again.

Ay, whether they lose to the naked life,
Or win to their hearts' desire,
They tell it all to the carline wife
That nods beside the fire." R. KIPLING.

PERHAPS the stay-at-home Briton and the schoolboy fresh from his "Robinson Crusoe" would like to read something about

the great islands of the Solomons, recently placed under English protection, and something also about the habits and customs of their wild and savage inhabitants, appearance of the different islands, capacity to receive settlers, productions, &c. For such I write the fol lowing.

The principal islands protected are, I believe (the official information is very vague), San Christoval or Poura (the native name), Mala or Malayta (the natives mostly call it by the former name), Guadalcanar, so named by its Spanish discoverers (the word means "plains of gold")—these two latter are very large islands; Florida, which is smaller ("Engela" is the native term), also Ysabel is ours, I think, or "Engau" (native name), but of this I am not sure. It appears to us English on the spot, such an extraordinary idea for Germany to have claimed, and obtained too, any portion of the Solomon Islands. Why, there is not, to the best of my knowledge, a German trader in the group, at least I never met one, and I have been all over Solomons, with the exception

f Bongainville and Choisene Islands. The earest Germans are on New Britain (and a ice mess they are making of it there) and New Ireland. Why they were allowed to claim he two Solomon Islands mentioned above and art of New Guinea is more than any colonist an understand. We may thank the late Lord Derby for it all. His father would have cut off his right hand rather than have done it, and he result is now, that if an English trader hows his nose in the German part of Solomons e is hunted and, if caught, fined heavily (very often his vessel is confiscated and her cargo also), for trading without a German licence which is refused to non-Germans), a real "dog-n-the-manger" system, while all and sundry, if hey wish, trade all over British Solomons. But enough of this.

Of course there are any quantity of lesser slands and islets round and about the larger ones. I have, however, mentioned the principal, and will try to describe them and their nhabitants. Leaving the Santa Cruz group with their snow-white outrigger canoes, and

ferocious warriors with their seven-foot bows and three and a half foot arrows, poisoned at that), and after sailing some two or three days before the steady trades, one generally sights first the large island of San Christoval, the most easterly and southerly of the large islands. Its mountains tower aloft some 4,000 or 5,000 feet, and are seen a long distance off, and the whole country is clothed with forest high and dense from mountain summit to the sea. As the vessel gets closer one sees at a glance that volcanic action has assisted, at all events, in its formation, and it lacks (as do all the Solomon islands, except Mala) the outer fringe of coral reef enclosing the waveless lagoon waters, so characteristic of many of the islands of eastern Polynesia. Then one comes to the little island of San Catalina, or Oriki as the natives call it, some two miles long by one across. There is no anchorage here for large vessels, and you lie off and on. Two or three canoes come out to meet us, and they are very different from all those of the surrounding groups in having no outriggers. These beautiful little boats will be

described later on. The thing that strikes one when for the first time these people are seen, is the colour of the teeth, which are all a glistening, gleaming dark brown, or even black, without exception, and the effect when first seen is very weird. This is caused by every one, without regard to size, sex, or age, almost continually eating betel nut and lime. The next thing that strikes a visitor is the comparatively short stature of this people. Particularly will this be noted if one comes from any of the eastern groups, the Fijians, Tongans, and Samoans being among the tallest of the races of the earth, many of the men being simply young Hercules in brown, splendidly proportioned, and, among the chiefs especially, almost always over six feet high, and often six feet four to six inches. Among these Solomon folk the men are short, stout, and thickset. A person over six feet is rare; they are smaller on the average than the northern white, while the eastern Polynesian is larger and appears more powerful, although in reality he is not, having little staying power.

Away on the other side, on the starboard, some five miles off lies another little island, and yet some eight or ten miles from Poura. It is called Santa Anna, or, by the natives, Oah. It is extraordinary how we Europeans will persist in giving fresh names to places already known by native terms to their inhabitants for generations. The English are now surveying in the Solomon Islands, and calling every bay and headland mostly after Captain Jones, of H.M. Service, or Commander Brown of the Fleet, seldom taking the trouble to find out the native name. We colonials have done the same all over Australia. There is a fine land-locked harbour in this little island called Mary Harbour, facing San Christoval, and a very large native town in it called Sapuna. The chief, Mai, had worked in Fiji when a boy, and we found him a very cunning, deep fellow, and the late Captain MacDonald told us (the captain had been adopted as a son, and into the tribe, by the old chief before Mai's time, and was the fighting chief of the large tribe when we called, always commanding in battle) he had

all his work cut out to keep Mai in hand, who was ever intriguing. One of the largest and finest temples (or tambu-house) I have seen in the group is in this town of Sapuna, and I may as well describe it before I go further.

The temple is by far the best and largest house in the town; it is perhaps a hundred or a hundred and fifty feet long, by twenty-five or so broad, and probably twenty feet high. The roof is much peaked and the walls low, with verandah in front, having only one door and no windows, and the whole covered neatly with the large strong leaves or fronds of the sago palm, which grows all over the group. All the houses in the village are made of these fronds, and the huts are made like the temple, only much smaller, most of them being only about six feet high. Oddly enough, I never saw the natives using the pith of these palms to make sago; still they know it is good for food. Every post in this temple is carved grotesquely in the figures of men, facing outwards invariably in all directions, and supposed, I imagine, to represent the ancestors of the tribe, tutelar

deities of the town. The religion of the Solomons is ancestral worship, and also of the shark and crocodile. The great shark god was worshipped all over Eastern Polynesia, and is yet treated with great respect there, and fed regularly ; but the Fijians, Tongans, Samoans, New Hebrideans, and Line Islanders eat him whenever they get the chance. But no Solomon Islander would touch the food ; he is prayed to and fed again here. I can't say if this adoration extends to the Santa Cruz group. This worship and non-worship of the shark may yet, I imagine, throw some light on obscure, ancient migrations of the race. Close to this very town once we found a very big shark caught in the reef (*i.e.*, left in a basin in the reef by the tide going out), and we whites rushed over to finish him off with our rifles, &c., but Mai ran up and begged us not to kill the tribe's god, or harm would come of it. On another occasion he prevented me shooting an alligator which had seized one of his men at a fishing party. We heaved down our vessel in this bay to clean her bottom, so one had much

intercourse with those folk at Sapuna. Three or four of the great war canoes, forty or fifty feet long, are housed in this temple, and half a dozen great bowls, gleaming in "barbaric pearl" shell, countersunk all round the sides, and capable of holding a man easily, and used at the frequent cannibal feasts, are also stored there. No woman, or child, or uninitiated lad is ever allowed into or near this sacred enclosure. The bodies of their chiefs and principal warriors are first buried. When the flesh falls away from the bones they are collected and placed in the interiors of great hollow timber fish, carved from the solid log, and made to resemble albacore, or shark, and hung from the roof, each man's bones occupying one fish. These fish coffins they refuse to sell at any price. Several hundreds hang from this tambu-house, some over five feet long, and so down to six inches.

No bones of women are thus preserved. Some of these fish-idols are very old. A few of the old men, the peace chief, the rain makers, live for the most part in the temple, and a

ghastly place it is to sleep in I can tell you, as I have done. Sleep in, did I say? No sleep will visit any white man's eyes while the mother-of-pearl on canoe and bowl gleams in the fitful firelight (little fires are always kept burning to drive off mosquitoes), and the great fish and bones rattle and clang in the land breeze, and the white skulls of the foemen of the tribe knock against each other under the verandah—an awful place truly at midnight. Cannibals sleeping round you (for Mai is as great a man-eater as I have come across), one requires to harden his heart like the nether millstone to stand it. These skulls swinging at the doorway, each dented with club or tomahawk, show the prowess of the tribe—grim souvenirs of many a wild head-hunt. For the Solomonites, be it known, are as keen head-hunters as are the Dyaks of Borneo, and annually start out, after yam planting, in their great war canoes on great head-hunting expeditions, pure and simple.

At Mala, between Aliti Bay and Isobel Island, is shown a great flat rock jutting out

into the sea, where over a hundred men on a head-hunting trip fell fighting *à ıa* Spartan style—

> "On a bed of crimson sand
> Fighting hard and dying grimly—
> Silent lips and striking hand,"

and died to a man, and were eaten. The British will have to put down these head-hunting exploits if they wish to keep the peace in the Solomons. They are the curse of the group, and the first step will be to make every tribe bury its war trophies of skulls hanging under every tambu-house in the land. These are the first things shown to every visitor, the pride of every village and tribe. The old men count the numbers daily or weekly; every young warrior dreams of adding to the ghastly cluster. Heads of women and little ones, alas! are seen with the rest. Every head counts—*even the heads of whites.* Close to the temple stands a structure of wood, some fifteen or twenty feet high, and forming at top a small platform, on which the various chiefs

of the different tribes make their speeches on the occasion of a cannibal feast, or "*bea*," or when contributions of native shell money are called for, to buy a canoe, or slaves, or any other tribal public matter; to declare war, or make peace. On these occasions each chief vies with his brother chief in giving more Solomon money than his neighbour, and jealous rows and squabbles often result.

San Christoval is about ten miles from Santa Anna. The natives are the same and speak similarly, and are armed in the same way, with spears, and a tomahawk (mission axe) set in a handle some four or five feet long. They also carry an odd sort of shield club shaped like a large old-fashioned billhook, with a handle some four feet long. Some folks say this weapon is used as a paddle; it never is—at least I never saw it so used. It is also very heavy; but I have seen it used both as a club and a shield: the natives carry no other here. Each large island has its own characteristic weapon, and an old hand on seeing a native can name the island he hails from, by the

weapons he carries. The bow is not generally used here.

The native never goes unarmed, or the white either if he has any sense. In fact, a man going about without any weapons is looked upon as an idiot. Almost every native one meets now has his Snider, or Martini, or Winchester even—thanks to Yankee traders—or double-barrelled gun. Poura, or San Christoval, was first discovered by the Spaniards in 1567, and with a view to keep the English out of the matter, the fact was kept a strict secret, and the knowledge of its position lost for two centuries, when it was rediscovered by the English 1767–69. Very probably, however, the old Spaniard buccaneers knew of these islands, for we are told when European fleets were sent to punish them they vanished away and could not be found; this happened many times. What more probable than that they simply went to the Solomons to hide and refit? Three things lead to such a conclusion. When the Spaniards first discovered the group, pigs were found. Where did they come from?

Next, the Mala bushmen make and use a sort of tobacco from some native plant. I have tried it myself. From whom did they learn to smoke it? And thirdly, European diseases which need not be further described here are exceedingly prevalent about Makera harbour, much more so than on any of the other South Sea groups. It is also stated that in the fine harbour named above, very old marks on the trees, &c., of vessels having been heaved down are to be seen. Although frequently in this harbour, I have never observed these marks myself. Besides this, the traditions of the natives themselves tend to support this view.

San Christoval is some eighty miles long, by twenty-five or so broad, and is the most south-westerly of the larger islands. The land is exceedingly rich and fertile, consisting of black soil of great depth ; yams, taro, and bananas are plentiful, but not so plentiful as in the New Hebrides, where the people are more industrious, and don't spend half their time head-hunting, as is the rule here. Many sorts of wild small nuts grow ; they are relished by the

natives, but are too oily for our taste. The people are very fond of stews of fish, &c., and these small nuts are always added. I never met with stews anywhere else in the South Seas.

Cocoanuts are also plentiful, and would be much more so only the natives destroy them in their frequent wars. This island is full of beautiful bays, and fairly populated. The natives are great cannibals, yet not unfriendly to the whites, and good warriors. One day I said in a joking way to the old chief of a big tribe, I would some day come and be their war chief. Two or three days afterwards, while shooting with the captain, we were surrounded by two hundred armed warriors, the old chief leading, and they insisted on my becoming their war chief, with a new house and, ye gods, *seventeen maidens*, no less, for my wives! In vain I tried to evade such a fate, and begged and protested. It was three days before I got away, by the skin of my teeth; but this is another story, as Kipling has it. While these people are not nearly so

treacherous as the Mala men, they are much more daring. Personally, I like them better than the other natives of this group. "Rano" is one of the finest bays in the island, and its chief, Taki, is not half a bad fellow. The natives here trace shallow, fine lines on the face, forming square or diamond patterns, which are not disagreeable. The population of this island, and indeed all over the Solomons, is much more dense than in the New Hebrides.

The clothing used by both sexes all over the group is very scanty indeed. A small T bandage is worn by the men, and a narrow girdle of grass by the women; ornaments of pearl shell, shaped like a crescent, and often six inches across, are worn round the neck by the local swells, and necklets of dog's teeth. In these south lands the male is always more highly ornamented than the female—following nature in this, as in other things. The septum of the nose is generally bored through, and a piece of long shell or bone, ground to the size and shape of a pen-handle, is often kept in

it; these are called by sailors their owner's main booms. Bracelets and armlets are constantly worn. The girls wear the teeth of the flying fox (*Pteropus*) and the porpoise in the ears, and these family jewels are handed down from mother to daughter. The flying fox is therefore very scarce in the Solomons, in consequence of being so continually hunted for the four eye teeth, which only are valued. Every one you meet here, old and young, is chewing betel nut. The natives say they use it to keep away fever and ague, which is very prevalent; and it may do so, as the taste is very bitter, and it is at all events a stimulant, and makes one half drunk for ten minutes or so, but a drink of cold water at once removes the feeling. It is eaten thus: about half a betel nut, or even a quarter of one (it is about the size of a large marble), is taken, wrapped up in a green leaf of a plant like a convolvulus, which grows all over the islands. The natives are most particular in picking these leaves themselves, and will seldom use any picked by a stranger. I

imagine they are afraid of being poisoned. The bit of nut and leaf are then put into the mouth; a little coral lime is then taken from the pretty lime box made of bamboo, and carried by all, on a quaintly carved lime stick to the lips. The whole is then masticated, the lime sweetening the bitter of the nut and leaf. The saliva then becomes blood-red, and its flow stimulated. The lads and lasses often smear their lips and cheeks with this red matter. The taste is not disagreeable. The whole is chewed for some little time and then swallowed. This eating of betel nut makes the mouth and stomach quite warm. It is eaten every hour or so by every one, making, as I said before, the teeth dark brown when used continuously. What *kava* is to the Eastern and Southern Polynesian, what *mate* is to the South American, what salt is to the Arab, betel nut is to these people—they simply cannot do without it. It is thought among all these folk, on every island of the group, a great mark of friendship to eat betel nut together, something like the

partaking of salt in the Soudan. Personally I never went ashore unless betel nut had been first offered by the local chief without being asked for; the offer is never refused, unless you wish to give offence. And when this solemn rite was over you could go ashore and do pretty well as you liked. Had you not eaten betel nut together? Had you not smoked the pipe of peace? You therefore need fear no harm for the time being, *i.e.*, from that particular tribe. Had the many whites killed in the Solomons in the past just studied the customs of the natives a little, and kept their betel ceremony in mind, they might have been alive to-day. A Solomon chief seldom breaks this rule of hospitality. But we English are always too much inclined to agree with the naval officer somewhere, who wrote in his log, "Habits beastly, customs ditto."

Kava, although used all over East and South Polynesia and in New Hebrides, is not known to these people, or those of Santa Cruz, where betel is also eaten. These folk

of Poura are continually buying men and women with Makira money. Makira district, as I mentioned before, is on this island, and the whites call a certain sort of Solomon shell money by this name. This shell money is made by the women from small shells found on the reefs, and ground on stones—a slow process—to a shape and size very like the segment of the backbone of a small fish, with a hole in the centre, and strung on a fine sinnet. It is of three colours, red, black, and white, similar to our £ s. d. The red is most valuable, one bead of that colour being equal to four of white, and two of black; also one Makira white bead is equal to four flying foxes' teeth, and two of the dog.

Mala money is similar, only of smaller size. Thus a complete system of native currency exists all over the group, and everything of European manufacture used as "trade" by the whites has its fixed price in Makira or Mala money. Men, women, and children are bought and sold with it, as domestic slavery exists all over the Solomons. If a person is

bought (let us say for *culinary purposes*) the price is double what it would be if only purchased for adoption. The price of a man in the former case is six hundred fathoms of Makira money. A few years ago a thousand fathoms was offered by a Paura tribe, *for a white man.* The local chief showed the writer the whole quantity. Shortly afterwards a British man-of-war was met; the officers talked with pride of the quietness of the islands at that time, were laughed at, and the story of the offer to buy a white told, and disbelieved; but the man-of-war's boat next day, with the whole crew in *mufti*, found it only too correct, and seized the whole sum. Prisoners taken in war are sold, either for food or for slaves. The latter are well treated, and are as one of the tribe, but are always liable to be eaten.

A temple being built, or a war canoe launched, has no "*mana*" until one, two, or more men are killed. This word is a queer one, and I know of no one term in English to explain it. It or its equivalent is used all over the vast South Seas. It means super-

natural power, soul, war reputation. A man's breath in his "*mana*," also the smell of his body, which means much to an islander. Many tribes kiss by smelling each other, a dog knowing his friend by scent (so can all South Sea folk for the matter of that) is said to smell his master's "*mana*"; of course there are other terms for soul, breath, &c., but the word is used when anything beyond the common is implied, and it has very many meanings.

An old couple lose their child perhaps. They gather their money together, buy a youngster, and adopt it. Wives are also purchased in this way.

This island is very well watered; rivers flow into every bay, and a few are navigable for small vessels, boats, &c. I forgot to mention before that the betel palm is very handsome, just like a miniature cocoanut-tree. It is from six to ten feet high, and adds much to the picturesqueness of the villages. The feasts, &c., are called "*beas*" about here. The chiefs on this island, and indeed all over the Solomons, have little power—much less so than in the

southern and eastern groups, where a chief's order is never disobeyed, under any circumstances.

There are generally two chiefs to each Solomon tribe, the war chief and the peace chief, who is often high priest as well; the former only exercising power in war-time, the latter during peace, not at all unlike the two consuls in old Republican Rome. The peace chief carries a little club, like one of our life preservers, beautifully inlaid with mother-of-pearl. No *human* sacrifice can be killed except with this "life destroyer," so by the priest refusing to allow this club to be used the victim is saved. I have seen full two hundred shouting, rowdy, island lads quietened in a moment by the priest-chief shaking this little club in the air. The chiefs rule merely through the superstitions of the people. They alone possess the power to bark in the temple, and it is by this barking that the gods and dead ancestors of the tribe are summoned to the tambu-house and communicate with the tribe. Thus while Captain MacDonald

was war chief of the tribe at Sapuna Santa Ama, when our vessel was being "hove down there, the natives persuaded one of our black boat's crew to desert; it was Mai's doings. We complained to the captain. He said nothing at the time, but next evening at sunset as I stood on the beach, I saw a canoe just coming ashore, and out of it stalked the captain, a tall and powerful man, dressed as a Solomon war chief, painted from head to foot, with noselet, breastlet, waistlet, earlets, armlets, kneelets; with shield, and spear, and club—and very grim he looked in his war-gear in the gloaming. Some children and girls playing on the beach bolted for their lives, and I unslung my Winchester, for I did not recognise the captain at first. We then both marched off to the temple. Surrounded by all the grim idols and fish coffins of the old chiefs, he presently began, as darkness closed in, to bark like a little dog. All the townsfolk made a bee line for the scrub straight away, leaving their evening meal. After a while a couple of old men crawled into the temple,

and asked why were their fathers angry? In consequence of the boy stolen from the ship it was explained, the captain imitating the voice of the old chief recently dead. "The boy will be returned to morrow," was the answer; "let not the gods be angered." And the lad was brought back next day, tied up hand and foot to a pole carried by two men, and covered with the leaves used in cooking men; and he got such a fright he never left our heels while we remained in this bay. The chiefs also alone have the great power of tambu. A large fruit tree ripens; a crossed stick or a bit of dried cocoanut frond is tied round it by one of the chiefs; it is not touched until the tambu sign is removed.

Anything can be thus tambued—a pretty girl, a canoe, a hut, a strip of beach; and nothing would make these simple children of nature dare to break this mystic sign. A dreadful death, or awful pains, are supposed to follow any lapse from its stern rule, and the priests doubtless see to this, and so they hold their own.

In the inland parts of Fiji the word *nitu* is used for ghosts, or spirits of the dead. It is peculiar that the same word, having the same meaning, obtains here, as also at Malicolo.

Mala or Malayta is the next large island to the north-east. It is about a hundred and twenty miles long, by about thirty broad, with mountains some two or three thousand feet high. It is also covered with dense forests, and the land is equally fertile, the soil being a deep black loam. On the south side, near Port Adams, there is a large boat passage going right through the island from sea to sea. While passing in our boats we were fired on frequently from the various little mangrove islands, although the powerful local chief, "Big Joe," was with us. This is the only chief I saw in Solomons make his men obey him. We saw no natives, however, about.

The district thus cut off is called Mara-ma-siki, and the next town is named Las, and Supaina is the best harbour until one comes

to Aliti Bay on the north-west coast. These Mala folk are the most treacherous, as well as the darkest and smallest physically of all the Solomon Islanders. They are continually intriguing to take one's vessel, and "anchor watch" should always be maintained while trading in this group, indeed, all over the Solomons peculiar precautions have to be taken. One never knows when a head-hunting party, three or four hundred strong, will swoop down on your vessel—and a white's head is prized "above rubies." When first I sailed these seas I felt much surprised at the preparations made by our old sea-dog of a captain, who had made, as he boasted, twenty-two voyages to the Western Pacific without a *muss*—a unique record truly. The two six-pounders at each side of the wheel were cleaned up, loaded to the muzzle, and every evening after the vessel had anchored (and in these narrow and unchartered seas to anchor every night is the rule) all the small bullets, bolts, &c., tied up in a canvas bag to fit the bores, were drawn, and the little cannon squibbed.

This answered a double purpose. It told the bushmen a trader was in the bay, and showed all and sundry we were prepared.

The little guns were then cleaned and reloaded, primed; a slow match was lit, and burned nightly on the cuddy table. Every white kept his Winchester, or Martini, and revolver loaded in his bunk, day and night. Spare ones were kept in the captain's cabin, and arrangements made that during every hour of the night a white was on guard on deck, and three loaded sacks were lashed to the main mast. Guess what they held? Why, glass bottles broken small, to be strewn on deck in the event of the natives attempting to board. These bottles seemed admirable. They would not much inconvenience the whites with shoes on; but in the event of two hundred savages bounding on a glass-strewn deck at midnight, the effect may be imagined. Some good folk, not knowing these islands, might consider such precautions unnecessary. By no means. Even now as I write there are parts of this group *where no vessel dare anchor*, except indeed a

man-of-war. Any mere trader doing so simply invites his fate. During the hours before dawn the savages come down in their thousands under cover of the darkness, and board; whether asleep or awake, what can five or six whites do against so many? The crew, both black and white, all killed and eaten, the ship plundered and burnt, and the papers report another trader "missing." Nothing further is done. In some few cases a few huts are burnt or cocoanut-trees cut down, and this is considered sufficient. All other nations protect their subjects in foreign climes—while they conduct themselves—*except the English*. In the Solomons our prestige is pretty well gone. The natives imagine they can kill the British with impunity, and, upon my word, they are very nearly right. As simply an abstract principle, it is very questionable if it is to the advantage of any nation, great or little, to allow its subjects to be killed, without making any inquiry about their deaths, or taking any steps to punish their murderers, even if they be only mere traders, or common folk. Those of

us that go down to these seas in ships have to consider such things.

The *Borealis* was taken at Suluhow off this very island of Mala a few years ago, in broad daylight; the *Marion Remie*, trading here, was never heard of; the *Dancing Wave* was taken at Gela, and many and many another. The list would fill a page, a black page.

Now, let us hope, since Mr. Woodford has at last been appointed Resident Assistant Commissioner at Solomons, that these long lists of, for the most part, wanton murders, may become a thing of the past, and that he be given sufficient power to make his name felt and his high office respected in these wild seas. Some "stay-at-homes" seem to think that whites who sail these seas are always shooting or fighting on the slightest occasion. This is all a mistake. It is not the *rôle* of a trader or recruiter to quarrel; it simply does not pay, it stops trading, and the captain becomes a marked man among the natives. And apart from humanity and all that, the owners object to it; it is not business, it spells ruin for that trip.

Nearly everywhere women and children come off in their canoes to trade. It shows much confidence in the white, I think; if treated badly, this would never be done. Some persons one meets seem to imagine all the scoundrels of half the earth gather to the South Seas. This is another mistake. One comes across more blackguardism in Sydney or Melbourne in a week than in Polynesia for years. The average ruffian is not much of a hero, and cares not to take his life in his hands; and here, where an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the rule, and the law of *lex talionis* is so entirely absolute, the ruffian is conspicuous by his absence. This is my experience, at all events. Of course there are black sheep; is any flock without them?

At Aliti Bay the natives asked double prices for everything, and when we refused purchasing, the local chief on our own decks told us we were bad men, and he would take our vessel, and settle the matter so. We threatened man-of-war, but he laughed, twitched his finger and thumb in our faces, and said, "English

man-of-war no savee fight," and went off home. As he went over the side I told him to "look out for lightning along of night." That night it was dark, so at about nine o'clock we sent some three or four rockets close over his village. Next morning came the frightened chief, with the propitiatory pig, and "Oh, speak to your gods to bring no more lightning so near my town." We agreed to do so, had fresh pork for dinner, and advised him not to be saucy to whites again. About a third of these people are covered with a sort of skin disease called "Tuckalau," ringworm. It is catching by contact, and is a parasite, but can be killed by sulphur and grease dressing daily for some three weeks. These Mala folk are armed with bows seven feet long, and unpoisoned arrows three and three and a half feet long.

These arrows are effective for over a hundred yards—out of gunshot. Short triangular swords of heavy wood are also in use, not at all unlike in shape the old Roman sword. The spears are not so plentiful as at Poura, but shields are carried by nearly every one.

The chiefs here wear great wristlets, from the size of a dinner-plate down to that of a tea-plate—the larger the size the greater the rank—and from half to three-quarters of an inch thick, made from the shell of the gigantic clam. These are often so heavy that the wearer has to sleep continually on his back with his arms crossed—a victim to fashion. Circular looking-glasses, often six inches in diameter, are frequently worn in the slit ears; and once a chief sleeping with us on board, as they are fond of doing, when retiring close to me on deck—the best place to sleep in this hot climate—slipped the glasses out, and actually twisted his ears over his head—slept in his ears in fact—to keep them out of harm's way, I suppose.

The girls wear pretty bracelets, and if of rank, from elbows to shoulders, called *okerties*, as thin as a pen-handle, made from the clam shell also, and looking like marble. It takes from ten to twenty of these to purchase a wife. I have forgotten their price in shell money.

As one works along the coast to the north-west you come to many pretty islands: one,

Karda-Kinar, is some four or five miles long by two broad, and was, when I was there, uninhabited. A head-hunting party had cleared it out some time before. Would not this island, or one similar, admirably suit these Socialists so anxious to try new experiments, communal and otherwise; the new woman, and all the rest of it? £50 in trade will buy it from the local chiefs. Here they may make their own laws and judges, cultivate their own land, as fertile as any under the sun. Clear the scrub away and fever and ague will clear too. Great Britain will not trouble probably. A goodly number of whites will awe the head-hunters. I make a present of the suggestion to all Socialists, and — well — New Women. St. George's Island, fifteen miles long, off Engau, and Murray Island, also, hilly and full of wild pigs, are both without population. The cocoanut crab is found here, as Bon Gaultier the inimitable says :—

"There, methinks would be enjoyment,
Where no envious rule prevents:
Sink the steamboats, cuss the railways,
Rot, oh! rot the three per cents.

There the passions, cramped no longer,
Shall have space to breathe, my cousin.
I will need some savage woman,
Nay!—I'll need at least a dozen.

There I'll rear my young mulattos
As no "Toorak" brats are reared:
They shall dive for alligators,
Catch the wild goat by the beard."

These islanders have some queer ideas They never speak of the dead. It is not the thing to do (the Australian blacks have the same rule). They don't care to mention their own names either. If one ask a man his name, a comrade always answers. The people wear little or no clothing, the young girls none at all. Some one says somewhere, that clothing is the badge of the loss of innocence. If this be true these folk are very innocent indeed. This is the only place I know of where something is not worn,—even the fig-leaf is wanting. The sexes keep apart, and don't sit or eat together. White is the sign of mourning, as in China and among the Australian tribes.

They have another odd custom on this Mala: the bushmen will not allow the beachmen to

plant any food—yams or taro—nor will the latter allow the former to catch a fish. The breach of either of these rules, leads to hot war at once. Markets are therefore held twice a week or so, when fish are exchanged for yams and taro, &c. Two small fish for a yam is the usual thing. The women trade, while the men on each side stand on guard. The trading ground is generally some midway beach or other. The island women don't leave their canoes, while the bush ladies wade out a little, and the chaffering begins—the male is no bargainer all the world over. Both sexes wear very pretty little combs here, often beautifully worked in yellow grass, and sometimes most artistically inlaid in mother-of-pearl—a white lady might well wear them.

Many of the principal chiefs also wear necklaces of human teeth. I imagine these show the number of the wearer's victims—and feasts. Questions on this matter remain unanswered. These necklaces are much prized, and hard to purchase.

On this island the chiefs confidently assert

that a small race of men (?) inhabit the mountains of the interior. They go in families, do not plant food, but steal yams and bananas. Some even say they are unacquainted with the use of fire; they do not build houses, but roam from place to place sleeping in trees. Are these folk monkeys or men? Langi, chief of the island of Kwai, told me that two of these little folk had been caught by an inland tribe whom he knew. One had died, the boy, but the girl was alive; he had seen her. He arranged to bring her down to me for a Winchester, but on our next visit poor Langi had been killed in a raid, and his successor was not friendly. However, so many stories are told about these little people, there may be something in it. Captain MacDonald told me, on being spoken to on the subject, that he had heard much the same tale before on another little island.

Along this north-east coast are many little islands on the reefs, very thickly inhabited, Aio, Kwai, Suluhow, Kwamkwaro, Manomba, and others. These are not shown on the charts.

They are all within the outer reef, which we saw only on this part of Mala, and they are artificial, or partly so. A higher part of the inward side of the outer reef is chosen, stones and earth are brought from the shore, and a small island is built a few feet above high water, a narrow passage for canoes going right through. A few cocoanut-trees are planted and then the beach folk build their small huts touching each other. Each native sleeps on a small platform, some three feet from the ground, and at night a little fire is kept lighted under, for the double purpose of keeping away mosquitoes, and killing the miasma. No Solomon native cares to sleep on the ground.

The whole of the outer reef is divided off into fields, by rows of stones, one field for each household ; and no one is expected to fish at low tide except on his own reef field, but he may follow his fish, started on his own ground, anywhere.

A young fellow is not allowed to marry here until he has a house built, and this means he has to add to his island, so the friends on each

side, lads and lasses, assist, and a bee is got up, American fashion. Some of the huts are even built over the sea, as in New Guinea, and these "lake dwellings" are connected with the island by one long cocoanut log only, which from the hut side can be lowered into the sea nightly. An adventure happened to one of us here. The young fellow had some words that morning with the boat-steerer (it is so dangerous for one white only to go in the boat on this coast). Towards evening we came to a lonely river, and the young fellow went for a wash, fifty yards or so from the boat as she waited. While washing in the shallow water, and keeping at the same time a bright lookout for alligators and sharks, he never noticed some sturdy mountaineer-women, stealing on him from behind. In consequence of the morning's tiff the other white said not a word. Possibly the bather might have got away had he used his fists, but against women—even black ones—this was out of the question, so after a great struggle down he went in the shallows. The women then threw him up in the air with their

hands, as a man is tossed in a blanket, and so took him ashore, held him down and rubbed his chest with sand and cocoanut husk until the blood came. This was to wash off the white pigment from the skin. These children of nature thought *the white was painted.* When they failed they let him dress himself, and some beads made them all friends. At Suluhow, a white named Rental (he was afterwards killed at Oba) was kept a sort of prisoner for six or eight years. He had almost forgotten his own language, and his story is a most interesting one, but too long to be told here. His adopted mother insisted on my giving her two or three pounds of tobacco, on the grounds of her old kindness to him.

Much trepang or bèche-de-mer is to be seen on the reefs here, but the natives are so treacherous it is too unsafe to gather it. Also many turtle, both the edible and hawks-bill, are to be found.

The white cockatoo and the hornbill—the local name of the latter *pina*—are also to be found on Mala, but oddly enough, neither is to

be seen at St. Christoval, only some score of miles distant.

The next large island, Guadalcanar, is a day's sail or so from Mala, to the south-west. It also is densely wooded, and some of its peaks are said to be 8,000 feet or so high. It is about a hundred miles long, by thirty broad; the land fertile, the natives larger and stronger, and less treacherous than those of Mala. They speak a different dialect, usually in a half-yell, and they carry handsome clubs plaited with yellow grass. I saw few bows and arrows, but every man carried spears. When fighting, the warriors wear a circular disc the size of a small plate, made from the clam shell, fastened in front of the forehead. It has an ornament on its face, made of tortoiseshell, like a wheel of a large clock.

This island has a dense population. On the west side there are few harbours after one passes Wanderer's Bay, so called from Mr. Boyd, of the yacht *Wanderer*, having been killed there years ago. These people are loud talking and boastful, yet seem dominated by the Savo

natives. Any one wishing to trade, &c., here, should take Savo boys with him; the natives from the large islands fear Savoans. Now Savo is a small island, scarce twenty miles round, yet it bears the same relationship to the Solomons as England does, or rather did, to the rest of Europe. The Savoans are the best canoe builders and sailors in the group. These South Sea vikings carry fire and sword to all the islands round them, in their great war canoes. They disdain to buy their brown "ladye loves" after the usual island manner, but take them with the strong hand, Roman-Sabine fashion. Most of them speak broken English, and have Sniders and breechloading rifles, and for insolence and sauciness carry off the palm from the whole of the islands. Their canoes are often sixty or seventy feet long and eight or ten feet wide. They are beautifully modelled, and there are one, two, three, four, five, and so on, up to a hundred or a hundred and fifty man canoes; *i.e.*, they will carry that number of men, and in this way the natives estimate their size. They are made out of

planks cut out of the solid wood, each plank having three or four projections on the inner side for holes, so as to allow knees to be lashed on. The planks are also lashed to each other strongly through holes at the sides, some four inches apart. The canoe's lines fore and aft are very fine, the bows being gracefully carried up three or four feet above the rest of the canoe, and often end with the head of a sea bird carrying a fish in its bill. Circular knees are lashed to the projections, inside the planks, and the whole of the joinings inside and out are covered with a sort of cement made from the ground kernel of a nut the size of an apple, called "*muki.*" In a day or two it hardens like plaster of Paris after being put on. Pearl shell cut in squares, diamonds, and circles is inlaid in this putty ; and a warship gleaming and glinting in the bright sunlight of these seas as she glides gracefully along, often driven by a hundred paddles, is a pretty sight. No sails are used, nor are there any outriggers. The best whale-boats cannot overtake these canoes, at least for a short distance ; and the natives face the

heaviest seas, and make voyages of over two hundred miles. There is a curious bird found on all the islands of this group, but here at Savo it is very plentiful. It is about the size of a common hen.

These birds lay in the sand great quantities of eggs, simply scratching a hole and laying all together, then covering their eggs with sand to six inches or so, where they are hatched out by the sun's heat alone. The egg is of a brown colour, a little larger than that of a duck, and is admirable eating. A stick of Barrett's twist tobacco (the only sort cared for in the group) for ten eggs is the usual price. Here at Savo these birds are in a semi-domesticated state, to be seen all around the houses, and hanging by one leg from the little fences asleep. The sandy tracts where they lay are divided out among every householder, and although the islanders are great thieves, the household egg-paddock is never interfered with except by its owner. I was refused permission to shoot on this island, nor would they sell an adult bird to me. I got a very young one, but it refused to

eat, and so died. The domestic hen is simply not in it as a laying machine with these birds. I don't see why they could not be imported with a little trouble; they are as tame as our own fowls. I don't know what they eat; they are nearly nocturnal in their habits—at least in this Savo hot climate they sleep most of the day.

Between Guadalcanar and St. Christoval one comes to the smaller islands of Florida, called "Engela" by its people. These are thievish, treacherous, and insolent. Some few are Christians, and at Boli, the principal town, there is a mission station under the auspices of the Church of England. I am glad to say that this mission manages to retain the respect and esteem of both whites and natives—which is saying a good deal as far as missionaries go in the South Seas, I can tell you.

While here at Boli harbour one day, the white missionary being absent, a great Savo war canoe, chanting their weird war-song, came sweeping round the point under fifty paddles. All the villagers took to the bush at once, but

our boat faced the canoe, and halted her. It appears the head chief of Savo had built a new house, and it had no "*mana*" yet, so it had been sent to Florida for two boys. One fine lad was tied up, covered with leaves, at the bottom of the canoe. The mute agony and entreaty in the poor lad's eyes were more than I could stand, so I offered seven brand-new Tower muskets, one after the other, for the lad, and was refused. I must say I longed to tackle this man-eating canoe. Yet I dare not. I was a Government agent, an official, I was at a missionary town. Even if the missionary was at home, we could not save the boy except by force. A British man-of-war was cruising around. Had I used force to save the lad, I would have been arrested in a week, and tried for my life in a month. I hesitated. I suppose the native chief saw his danger from my face and yelled something. The canoe shot off like a great sea bird, my boat could not overtake her; the moment to act had passed. That poor lad's face haunted me for a week.

It was close to this island of Florida that the first lieutenant of H.M.S. *Sand Fly* was diabolically murdered some years ago, at a small islet called Nungu, *i.e.*, sand. On one occasion we had to anchor at this island of Nungu. It has a fine anchorage, and is usually uninhabited, but used by the natives for fishing visits. With our double in hand, and rifle on shoulder, one of us strolled into another little bay, out of sight of the ship, and came suddenly on about twenty Florida men at supper.

Clubs and tomahawks were grasped and spears levelled on one side, revolver case pulled round and opened and the ready breechloader cocked on the other. Had one sign of fear been shown, our hours—nay minutes—were numbered. We knew that. Their conversation began strictly in the potential mood, "What you wantum? Very good you go quick, this fellow place altogether belong to man Engela, suppose you no go, we fight." Answer: "Suppose you wantum fight, very good, I sing out along all

fellow boy—plenty he stop, big fellow ship, he sleep" (*i.e.*, anchor).

On hearing this they became a little more civil, and we shortly retired, with due precautions through the scrub and facing them. "Watch your man, but be polite." On returning on board we told our old sea-dog of a captain, and he swore by all his gods that, fight or no fight, he would have firewood, as he had none on board. So before daylight next morning both boats were fully manned (we had natives from other islands on board) and armed. We pulled silently ashore, and stealing through the bush, quietly surrounded our friends of the previous evening. Nothing could exceed the contrast in their behaviour when they found themselves at a disadvantage. "Oh yes, take as much wood as we liked—they would help." But our captain was an old hand, and knew with whom he was dealing. So these insolents were told to get into their canoes at once, and clear out —and they went without a word and we cut our wood in peace, but not before the whole

island had been searched. The neglect of such precautions brings death, swift and horrible, in these sunny South Seas. Had the lieutenant known the people and faced them and bounced them, he would have saved himself. No natives will face an armed and determined white in the open—even one. This is a rule.

We had another bout with these Florida folk before we left the group, in this wise. We were between Mala and Guadalcanar, fully twenty miles from land. It had been one of those hot calms so frequent in the Solomons all day. It was about 11 p.m., the night was pitch dark, and the sails flapped to and fro; the vessel only rose and fell slowly on the long ocean swell.

The crew had been towing all day and were tired, and the watch, all but one, had been sent below. One of the boats lay alongside yet. We had just turned in on deck, with our friendly sixteen-shooter alongside—a good old South Sea habit this—when my special little native boy crawled aft and quietly called me,

saying he had heard canoes astern. To wake the captain and to slip behind the wheel was the work of a minute, but we could hear nothing. Yet after half an hour or so we thought we could distinguish the occasional stroke of a paddle, so the boat alongside was silently manned, her crew lying down in her, the two four-pounders got ready and swung round, and all hands called and armed, and so we waited. After a time—it seemed hours to us—we could just manage to make out the shadows of four large canoes looming through the darkness like some great sea birds. We could hear no paddles now—they came on as silently as ghosts—then for a long time they waited. A sailor lay beside each loaded four-pounder. At last they swept up on board, two at each side, and off went one of the guns right over them, and we yelled to them to come on (I had all my work to do to keep our captain from sinking them with the other gun); but no, they saw we were ready, and as fast as fifty paddles could drive each canoe, they shot into the blackness of the night. We followed in the

boat. With a coolness bred of long impunity from punishment they halted, and then began the palaver.

"Where canoe he come?"

"We man Ungela, going to fight man Mala."

And then burst out our captain in a rage, "Suppose you go along ship again, I blow you all away along big gun."

But their only answer was a defiant yell, and starting their wild war chant, they paddled away, keeping time to their song, into the murk darkness.

Had we been unprepared, we should have slept our last sleep on earth that night, and the papers would have had "Mysterious disappearance of another vessel in the Solomons." That boy of mine was spoiled by our skipper for the rest of the voyage. The amount of tobacco he got was enough to ruin any decent lad.

The last island to be described is Ysabel, or Engau. I believe it is included in the protectorate also, but am not very sure. It is

a few miles only north-west of Mala, and is about a hundred and twenty miles long, by twenty-five across. It appears less fertile than the other large islands. Its natives are timid, talk less pigeon-English and are less accustomed to whites than the peoples of Mala or Poura. They wear little or no clothing.

Many of the sea-coast villages are built *on* groves of trees, some twenty or twenty-five feet from the ground. Large platforms are made in the branches of the trees, and one gets to the houses by ladders of cane, which can be drawn up at will. The pigs, fowls, and little ones are all tied on each platform. Great heaps of stones, every one about the size of a man's fist, stand on each, and no one is allowed up the ladder unless he brings a stone with him. I was obliged to do so myself. These are used to hurl on the foe in case of attack. The reason these people lived thus, they explained to us, is that they are continually being attacked by the natives of Rubiana, lying to the north-west, who come down on head-hunting expeditions. In these aerial villages they make bridges from

house-platform to house-platform, similar to the ladders; but we whites found it almost impossible to get from house to house on these, while the lads run about the village with the utmost freedom and unconcern. Many of the principal men on this island wear wigs made of human hair whitened with lime, said to be the outward emblem of a secret society similar to our masons; the women and boys prostrate themselves on meeting a man wearing a wig. The natives do not much care for one to land.

They have very fine strong shields here, plaited strongly with cane. The arms are similar to those of Mala, but the spear is more used.

We saw much beche-de-mer on this coast.

One afternoon, having sailed in the boat all day, we came to a small shed close to a clump of green and graceful cocoanut-trees, not far from the beach. The day had been very sultry, and we proposed to have our afternoon snack under their grateful shade. No one was about, so the boat was grounded on the beach, and all of us, black and white, with Snider,

Martini, or Winchester, toiled up through the hot black sand towards the little grove. As he passed, one of our black boat's-crew looked into the little deserted hut. A wild Solomon war-cry brought us all to his side, and there, in one corner lay a heap of fresh human bones. Dried blood and brains were scattered on side-post and roof-tree of this gigantic Golgotha. Fire-mark and tooth-mark were on these bones —of men, women, and, alas! little children—as they lay piled together. We stood on the dried grass of their death-bed. They had doubtless been asleep when surprised. On the other side of the hut was a hole half filled with drying and rotting blood. Ugh! the demons had bled their victims, either before or at once after death. Great blowflies buzzed lazily round. The faces of our black crew were green with fright (the natives turn green when the white pales). With common consent each of us turned, and handling our weapons we were aboard and under sail again in no time. Somehow we had no dinner that day—no one asked for it.

It is a curious fact that the human parasite—*pediculi*, to give the scientific term, which infests the South Sea native, *will not live on the white, and vice versâ*. Is not this a most peculiar, not to say suggestive fact? How is it explainable, if we all come from Adam and his wife?

Now, what I am going to say will be deemed rank heresy by the scientific, I know, but to the common observer it seems forcibly borne in on one that in remote ages there must have been a land connection between Solomons and New Guinea and New Holland. Cockatoos and crocodiles are common to the three, and not to the New Hebrides, also iguanas, and sleeping lizards to all appearances the same as the Australian species, are found, and again the common black and white wagtail, a bird that does not fly far usually. Again in many of the tambu-houses one sees very good models of the emu, or cassowary, and the kangaroo, hung up near the idols. At first I thought returned labourers from Queensland had cut them out, although they seemed very old, but

was assured they were handed down, cut thus, from their forefathers long before any labourers had left. Now where, may it be pertinently asked, did these old carvers get their ideas? Why, from the living birds and animals, one would imagine, now died out. Methinks this must be deemed pretty conclusive. Again, the cuscus is found in Solomons, and not in the New Hebrides; also, although the snakes of Solomons are now non-poisonous, I believe altogether, the natives are terribly frightened at getting bitten, and seem much afraid of them. Why?

A word about the Solomon dogs. They are reared and kept exclusively by the women, never by the men, are a small sort of lap-dog, and are generally carried by the women, being almost unable to walk; they are useless for anything I know of, except for their teeth. The men much dislike and are jealous of them. I cannot say more on this subject here. These dogs cannot bark, but make a noise very like a baby crying.

One day I was shooting near a town whose

chief and people I knew well. A little girl about eight ran up, and held me by the belt, and talked away at a great rate. She was a bush little thing, and I did not understand her lingo (the bush tribes generally speak a different dialect from the beachmen). However, suddenly she threw herself on the sand at my feet, and managed to get my foot on her neck before I was well aware of it. One knows what this means well enough. In hot war it means that if a chief allows his foot to rest on the defeated one's neck, the man's life is safe, but he is a slave for ever, rescue or no rescue. I was puzzled at the child's action. It was soon explained. Shortly afterwards down came a lot of villagers, and insisted on taking the youngster. I told them what she had done. They said they did not care; her mother was being cooked in the town, and the child should go to the ovens with her.

"Never," I said. "What! we who had eaten betel nut together many times to quarrel for a mere child, to whom I had granted life in their

own way." I swore they should kill me first. They replied—

"Oh, that was an easy thing to do."

A bold front was the only thing now. Luckily I had my sixteen-shooter. Springing back, and putting a mark on the sand with my foot, I swore I would shoot the first man who crossed it. I said before, the natives do not care to face an armed white in the open. They knew I could answer for a dozen of them or so, and although clubs were up, and bows bent, they hesitated—as well they might; and I knew I had mastered them. Then one proposed I should buy the child fairly: they cared not to fight a friend. To this I at once agreed, and a *muss* was thus avoided, and a mission axe—worth tenpence—made me a slave-owner. Tell it not in Gath.

For a week she followed me everywhere like a dog. At last I paid a friendly chief half a dozen flasks of powder to look after the little one for me, and she howled like a demon at parting. I have never seen my little slave lassie again—alas, and alack a day!

Once I sailed these seas with a corpulent captain. Whenever a chief came on board, the first thing he was sure to admire was the proportions of our gallant tar, and the chief would feel him, and smack his own lips, and turn up his own eyes at the prospect of so much fatness—going to waste as one may say. These "chiefly" attentions our skipper much disliked. Well, one day both boats were absent trading, and it fell suddenly calm, "the old man" (the forecastle name for a skipper) and self were the only whites on board. The strong currents caught the vessel and carried her on to the rocks, and we could get no bottom a hundred yards from the shore; the under-flow from the waves kept her from striking. The natives gathered on the cliffs as ravens to a carcase, waiting for the catastrophe. I took off all my clothes, and we waited and waited for some two hours, the natives recognising the captain, and telling him plainly they would eat him at last. The strain on our nerves may be imagined. At last the captain's gave way. "Goodbye, G——, old

fellow," he said, "these beasts will have me in the ovens at once. You may escape—*you are thin.* If you see my old girl again tell her I was thinking of her at the last." This was said with a gulp, and a quiver in the voice. But just then the two boats came round the point, having at last heard our stern guns, and we were saved—a close shave.

The Solomon natives have a queer mode of treating their lads. A boy on coming to the age of puberty is placed in the tambu-house, where he lives from twelve to eighteen months, or at least until, according to the lad's rank, he has drunk the life-blood of from some ten to twenty large fish, I think bonitos. During this confinement no woman must see the lad, so he does not leave the tambu-house, except at night, his cooked food being left outside for him. When the proper number of fish are caught, a great feast (*bea*) is given, pigs, and perhaps a man killed, and the boy becomes a man and a warrior, and is on the lookout to kill some one, so that he may be entitled to wear the special ornament to those who have taken human life

—a child's even—a sort of Solomon Victoria Cross you see. Circumcision is not practised, as in most of the other islands.

The natives have a most ingenious way of fishing with a kite. The fishing-line is fastened where the tail of the kite ought to be; a common line holding the flying kite is fastened to the canoe, which is paddled against the wind; a thin horizontal line is fastened to the fishing one, a little above the native hook, made of pearl shell, being hook and bait in one. It looks not unlike a small flying fish hopping from wave to wave. The catch is brought to hand by the horizontal line, and altogether the whole thing is most original and successful.

The principal trade of the group is copra, *i.e.*, the sun-dried kernel of the cocoanut, mostly exported to the Continent and used for making fine toilet soaps, oil, &c., and the bye-product for cattle feed—ginger, vegetable ivory, *i.e.*, the nut of the sago palm, and used for making lady's buttons, &c.; pearl-shell, tortoise-shell, beche-de-mer, ebony, satin-wood, and dugong oil.

A few traders live on the different islands; many are killed from time to time, and generally no notice is taken, unless indeed in the case of French, Germans, or Americans, when usually a man-of-war makes inquiries, and punishes, if thought necessary. No white plantations exist, the danger to human life, and liability to fever and ague, the curse of the place, prevent planting operations.

A SOUTH SEA SNAKE STORY

"They are just the rude stories one hears
In sadness and mirth,
The record of wandering years,
And scant is their worth."

PATERSON.

SOME years ago a chum and self, Fijian planters, wanted labour boys, and made up our minds to go into the interior of Viti Levu (big Fiji) and get them for ourselves. We had of course to go on foot, and took some boys to carry a few necessaries and "trade" with us. We had been a week in the interior unsuccessful, when we came to a large town, which I will call for the sake of euphony and, well, shortness, Bula; its proper name is long, and rather unpronounceable. Just before, we had been for a few days without meat, when the chief of the neighbouring village sent us an invite to a feast. We were hungry, so we

went, walking thirty miles to do it, in the hope a luscious sucking pig say, might fall to our share. What was our horror when we found we had been asked to a feast of *frogs*, and six great big ones were sent to us crucified, on a large white dish (this latter was to show the chief had dishes, confound him!). I simply squirmed, but the "chum" hardened his heart, and devoured the whole lot with the gusto of a Frenchman, while I starved on taro, yams, and tea. Well, when we arrived at this big town of Bula we hoped for something better. We found it bitterly divided theologically, the chief and about half the people with him, had lately *lotued*, *i.e.*, turned Christian, while the nephew and heir, with many of the old men and *taukies* (land-owners) still worshipped the gods of their fathers, *Degi* (pronounced Indengi), the Jupiter of the Fijians. So, on the principle of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds, "the chum" and self thought it best to separate. We tossed up, I lost, and he chose the heathen part of the town, while your humble

servant had to content himself among the red-hot converts, and a native missionary burning with zeal for "the Cause." Well, Sunday came and "the chum" went out shooting, while poor I listened to an hour and a half's sermon, taken up wholly with denunciations of the bad, bad white man, a heathen in a heathen town shooting on the Lord's day, and who would yet go to the everlasting lake of fire, &c., the good white sitting there before them would go to Abraham's bosom. I felt I blushed under the wide-eyed wonder of a hundred converts, never contemplating being made a saint of in this way. Well, after service off I went and told "the chum" on his return what a demon he was considered in my part of the town. He, I regret to say, lost his temper, came over to the native missionary's house and abused him in good set terms in voluble Fijian. In this trying time what did the missionary do? Return railing for railing? No indeed; he knelt down and loudly prayed to save the soul of this erring and angry white man. This was too much for my gravity, and

I lay on the mats and fairly made the rafters ring with laughter, and some of the natives followed suit. As matters seemed strained the missionary next day found he had business in other towns, and would not be back for a week.

In the morning "the chum" rushed up in great glee, saying, "Oh, old man" (I am not old) "there are seventeen great snakes in the town being fattened up in bamboos as cages by the girls of the Sunday School for a missionary feast, and I'll never rest until I *buy and eat* the whole blessed lot. They are the best food I know of, and are non-poisonous. I'll get square with that fool of a meddling missionary, if it costs me all our 'trade' to do it." On inquiry I found he was right, my cook girl even (Fijian boys won't cook, they hold 'tis girl's work) had a great fat snake in a bamboo. He came out slowly on being whistled to, and ate from her hand. For days I did not see "the chum"; he was busy coaxing, wheedling, cajoling, and begging the girls to sell him their snakes. At

last he turned up and announced with great pride he had persuaded the missionary's own daughter to sell her snake, alas! for a small looking-glass. "They are all daughters of Eve," he shouted. "I'll have every snake yet," and I knew he would. When the leaderess fell, the rest were bound to follow, and they did. The wretch of "a chum" never offered me a share. He did worse; while trying to get a shot at some of the non-flying rails peculiar to the interior of this island, I came across a brace of wild duck; the old double did not fail, and I bagged both, and gave them to the cook to roast, and went off again to try my luck. On my return I met my tearful little cook, who "*dambed*" (to stoop for flogging), sat on her heels and bent forward and requested me to flog her, actually offering me a cane to do it with, as she had not looked after the ducks, and that bad white man had stolen into the house and ate one while she was out, so let her white chief beat her; she was bad and deserved it. Then I rose in my wrath; not satisfied with a couple of fat snakes

a day. "The chum"—chum indeed! should come and steal my "ewe lamb" of a duck while I had not tasted of animal food for a week (no pigs or fowls up here).

Down to the heathen part of the town I went, foaming. He saw me coming and bolted. An evil conscience; the missionary was right. I gave chase, but he was the faster. Had we met I am afraid our chumishness would have ended there and then, and the natives would have seen a stand-up fight, white fashion: and all for a duck. But remember, I was half starving.

On the Saturday morning "the chum" turned up triumphant, he had bought and ate—ye gods of this land—the seventeen snakes in a week. Even my little cook had succumbed, to a looking-glass also, and was busy feeding up a fresh and thin snake. "The chum" suggested he had better go to another town, "where there might be boys" (boys indeed; he only cared for snakes); "this Bula town was getting warmish." I told him go and be—well blessed. Perhaps that was not the word used, I forget, and he started "more in sorrow than

in anger," he said. "Snakes," I added. When the native missionary turned up in the evening he was furious, solemnly cursed that serpent white man (in more senses than one) in his sermon next day, and all his maternal ancestors for five generations. We are content to trace our forbears up to William the Norman, but the Fijians go further. I heard a boy of twelve *name* his ancestoresses for ten generations, and a man do so for twenty. What white could do such a thing?

On the Monday the missionary charged all his Sunday-school girls, including his own daughter, before the chief's court with selling,—feloniously selling,—the missionary snakes. As a quiet, decent and religious white chief—ahem! —I was invited to sit on the bench with the chief, and old men in the *rara*, the talking-place, *i.e.*, the public square of the town, and assist to judge this strange case. The crying girls came and begged my good offices, but of course, as an honorary magistrate, I could not entertain such proposals, I explained. Well, the trial came on in the evening, and I sat on

the *rara* with the chief's arm round my neck. Tell it not in Gath. The spokeswoman of the girls spoke up, said they were all guilty, they had sold the church snakes, but they had been tempted as their common mother Eve had been (who was a Fijian they said)—at this statement I had hard work to observe a becoming gravity—and like her they fell. The white's tongue was as oil. Let the chiefs punish, they would endure it." A whispered conference among us. Thirty lashes each were suggested. "What!" I said to the chief; "your own daughter, too." "Let her *vosota*" (endure it), Manlius-like he interjected, "serve her right, the little *mia*." Then I spoke. "Now chiefs and *taukies* say, why not let each girl pay sixpence or get twenty lashes. Seventeen sixpences are equal to eight shillings and a half—enough to get a *sulu* for each of you. There is a river ten miles off; let the young lassies get a basket of prawns each, and I'll give sixpence a basket for them. I get the prawns, you all get a *sulu* (a fathom of cloth) each, the chief a double one, the girls are punished and not

prevented from working. Now, what think you?" There was a pause, and then the chief spoke out, "Oh, wise white chief, your mouth speaks words of sense, and it shall be so. What say you chiefs? "*Indina, indina*" (true, true) was muttered and the sentence was given out by the chief, and repeated by the town herald. "Lash us at once, O chief," said the girls; "where can we get sixpence each?" "Is there not a river and prawns, oh bad and lazy ones; go get them, and sell to the good and wise" ("hungry" would have been the more correct form) "white here, and all that don't do this, come and get lashed next full moon. The court is over;" and to us aside, "Come, friends, the *kava* waits, let us go," and shortly afterwards a chorus of "*A mathas*" ("It is dry") rang out as the chief drained his *kava* bowl and called out his toast. Next day I bought seventeen baskets of prawns, and handed them over to the little cook, warning her of "the chum." All the judges flashed round in new *sulus*, the girls thanked me with tears in their eyes, and I feasted daily; the missionary alone

seemed rather miserable. "The chum" turned up a few days later, but not a prawn did he taste. My cook watched him as the cat her prey. He entreated and appealed to gods (heathen) and men, but I was as the nether millstone, and polished off the seventeen basketsful "to my own cheek." And now when I tell the story "across the walnuts and the wine," "the chum" says "honours were easy," but I hold I won the "odd trick." Don't you think so, gentle reader?

A FIJIAN TRAGEDY

THE following sad story is correct in its details; it occurred within the writer's ken, and may serve to illustrate how English civilisation and laws affect the Fijian mind and mode of thought. Years ago, Ravuso Ioni was the principal chief of Waia, one of a group of islands the most westerly in Fiji, called the Yasawas. About that time the parvenu Fijian Government had just been formed; and we planters and natives were blessed with a travesty of English laws and institutions down in the Yasawas; one of our planters was made a warden, a court-house was established, and a posse of native police sent down. It need hardly be said that these proceedings were a mystery to the natives; and even close to Levuka the more enlightened of them could at first hardly be brought to

understand the idea of any government. At all events, Ravuso troubled himself very little about the new *mata-ni-tu*, as the Government was called by the natives, but carried on in the old Fijian style of his fathers. Now there was a young man in Waia who made love to all the young girls; and not content with that, he also paid his attentions to the married women. The Fijians are a jealous lot; and by and by a mob of angry husbands complained of this young fellow to their chief Ravuso, who, with the advice of the old men in full council, decided that this gay lover was to be *buturakaed*, or turkey-tramped as we whites call it. This *buturakaing* is an institution peculiar to Fiji. The unfortunate is knocked down, and the natives dance and jump on him until he is insensible and nearly dead. A man seldom recovers thoroughly from a good, or rather a bad *buturakaing*.

Some, doubtless, of the jealous husbands or their friends were among the party that *buturakaed* the gay deceiver, because they carried out their orders so well that in three

weeks after the young fellow died from the effects.

In the old times most of us whites and natives would have said, "Serve him right," and the matter would have ended. But now there was law in the land; our warden was just appointed, and, new-broomish-like, ordered the arrest of Ravuso. After some trouble he was coaxed to surrender, and was confined at Somo-Somo, awaiting trial. Nothing so puzzles a Fijian as the slow procedure of our English law; and poor Ravuso pined in prison. So one day he asked his Bau jailers to be allowed a walk. They accompanied him; and all sat down under a large ivi-tree. After a time the chief proposed to get some ivis, and climbed the tree for the purpose. When he got to the top he called out to his astonished guards that he was going to throw himself down headlong. "Tell your white judge," said he, "that I am a chief and a son of a chief; that I can't survive the disgrace of being imprisoned like a felon; that the punishment given to the man of mine was just—he was

a bad man; that I am a chief, and had a right to punish him *vaka-viti*" (after the manner of Fiji). So saying, he threw himself down, broke his back, and died shortly afterwards.

In a day or two the news of the chief's death reached Waia, and a wail went up from each little village embowered in its cocoanut grove, for the death of their *Turaga*, as they call their chiefs. His wife, Lau Wai (to strike water as in fishing), and young daughter (fifteen years only) made up their minds that their chief should not go unaccompanied to Hades, but have some one to cook and look after him there. So one night they tied a rope between two trees, twisted it round their necks, and so strangled themselves after the old Fijian fashion. These people had been Christians ten years, but evidently believed in their old traditions still. Our warden was not a bad fellow, and I believe the unfortunate result of his first attempt at enforcing English law among the natives caused him many a pang.

And now the sad tale of the death of this

unfortunate Waia chief and his family is told in many a Fijian hamlet, in the cool evenings, as the sun goes down, under the shade of the lofty ivis and cocoanut-trees; and the women and children hear a thrill, of the power of that mysterious *mata-ni-tu* whose action hurled a Fijian chief from his high estate, and sent him and his devoted wife and daughter prematurely before the face of their Maker.

AMONG CROCODILES

"Ere birth he was *laid* low,
And yet no man I know
For high birth matched him.
Apollo was his sire,
Who with life-giving fire,
'*Ab ovo*' hatched him.

Just over Capricorn
This same Big Ben was born
A feeble lizard.
But with the years come strength
And thirty feet of length,
The most part gizzard."

J. B. STEPHENS.

PERHAPS you boys would like to hear something about crocodiles. We "up north" generally call them "gaters," short for alligators, you see. But as you know doubtless, true alligators are only found in America and nowhere else. The difference between each species is very slight, I believe though. Well, the first time I saw a "gater" was, curiously

enough, at the Solomon Islands, the group just taken possession of by England. At Santa Anna, an island off San Christoval, I saw two asleep on a mud flat not far from the native town. At the suggestion of the old sea-dog captain who was with me, I went right off to the chief for permission to shoot them. Of course I spoke the pigeon-English of the Pacific, understood all over that great waste of waters. Now, there are two chiefs to each Solomon tribe, the war chief and the peace chief or high priest, the former assuming authority in times of war, and the latter ruling during peace, something like the two consuls among the old Romans ; so the chief referred me to the priest. I was somewhat astonished when I met with a curt refusal, and was informed that the crocodile, together with the ancestors of the tribe, is regarded as a god and worshipped and regularly fed accordingly. This is also the case with the shark. In New Hebrides the shark is eaten, but never in the Solomons, but the great shark god was worshipped all over Eastern Polynesia before

Christianity, and is yet on many of the islands treated with much respect and fed. I now tried bribery, and offered mission tomahawks for permission to shoot, and also flasks of powder and tobacco, until the old priest fairly bolted from temptation to the temple. Then up came the war chief, and gave permission, and collared the stuff; but with the guile of the serpent, sent a whole bevy of boys and girls with me, who refused to return, and sung and shouted until the sleeping saurians were roused betimes. I lost my "trade," and did not get a shot. I have often since hunted "gaters," generally unsuccessfully. They have an exceedingly keen sense of smell, and you must be as careful not "to give them your wind" as if hunting deer. Some folk say that unless hit in a certain spot a bullet won't penetrate the hide. This is altogether incorrect. Modern rifles will drive a bullet through any "gater." Sometimes, indeed, the small flat bones on the back partly under the skin may turn a bullet, but that is all. I used a sporting Martini, and on one occasion hit a "gater"

between the eyes. The bullet went through the head, passing out underneath, killing the brute instantly. He was only about eleven feet, yet it took two powerful men to lift him on to a little wharf from the river with ropes tied to the head and tail, so heavy was the body. However, unless hit through the brain or behind the forearm, the "gater" is seldom bagged, as, in common with all reptiles, they are exceedingly tenacious of life.

The crocodile comes ashore generally about midday to sleep in the sun on the river-banks or seashore, generally lying head to the wind, and seems to prefer the mouths of rivers and brackish water; but I have seen many in fresh water lagoons, and on the other hand found them some miles out to sea.

The favourite food of the "gater" is the dog. An amusing thing showing this peculiarity happened at the Solomons. Tired with the eternal salt junk of shipboard, and seeing some very big fish in a large water-hole, I one day blew them up with a charge of dynamite. "Shameful thing to do," I hear some one say,

"unsportsmanlike," &c., &c. Well, try salt horse for a month, Mr. Sportsman, and you will do the same. This was in the shallower part of the hole, about two or three fathoms deep. We all jumped into the water to secure the stunned fish at the bottom, and were quickly joined by a lot of natives, until some thirty or forty of all sexes and ages were swimming and diving together. The natives had a dog, who was also swimming round in the deeper part of the river and barking. Suddenly, and right in the middle of us, two great jaws rose out of the water and opened. One yelp and the dog found his sepulchre in a "gater's" maw, and I was half drowned by the rush of the natives shorewards. Seeing afterwards some bubbles in the deepest part of the pool, I dropped a weighed cartridge with a long fuse attached over them. There was an awful commotion, and suddenly a very large crocodile bolted for the sea half a mile off. The natives were so close and numerous I dared not fire, but tried to get nearer and overtake the brute. I was simply not in it, although

a good runner. (Note.—Dynamite cartridges have little effect on "gaters.") Crocodiles are very bold in the Solomons, in consequence of the natives never attacking them. Once I was asked to a big fishing party. Now, such a party generally includes the whole tribe, men, women, and children. With rifle across my shoulders and a three-pronged fishing-spear in hand, I went. Why the rifle? some one asks. No old South Seaite ever goes unarmed in the Solomons; even in his bunk on board his rifle and revolver are with him ever (the native is never without his weapon either); if not, well, the new chum white does not survive to become an old South Seaite—that's all.

We fished in this wise—when the tide had been full, large and long nets had been put across the mouth of the small creek and extended some sixty or seventy yards on each side, and as the tide turned to go out the sea water, from being five or six feet deep at full, shallowed to so many inches at low tide, and we speared the fish, the men in water to the waist, the women and children working in

the shallows. I was in deepish water with the warriors ; presently I heard a cry, and looking round saw a crocodile about eleven feet long had seized a powerful man by the thigh, and was trying to pull him under. I unslung the rifle, and running up in a moment put the muzzle to the brute's head, but the chief threw the muzzle up, and said, "You must not shoot the tribe's sacred crocodile. The man has his long-handled tomahawk, let him save himself, don't interfere." And then began as manful a struggle as ever I saw. The brute tugged and pulled, until the small tree the man held on to with one hand swayed and bent at each tug. Not a cry or appeal did the man make, and no one dared to assist. The priest chief stood in front of us, tomahawk in hand, keeping us back with voice and gesture ; the man, shortening his long-handled mission axe in his hand chopped at the brute's head with it for five minutes (it seemed half an hour to me), and finally managed to gouge out one of the brute's eyes with the corner of the tomahawk. Not until then did the savage beast let go of

the man's thigh and swim away. Orders were given to lift the net and let the god through into deep water. There were four or five great holes on each side of the man's thigh, into each of which I could put my little finger, and the blood was colouring the water around us, yet it was with the greatest difficulty I could prevail on this hardy fellow to give up his fishing and let me dress his wounds and go home, nor would he leave the water until I said the smell of his blood would bring up every shark and "gater" for miles around.

We whites are apt to think that all courage and daring remains with us alone. All I can say is, I seldom or ever saw more hardihood or coolness shown by any one, black or white, than that displayed by this Solomon warrior. I quite admired his cool *sang froid*, and, well—gave him all my stock of tobacco.

When the natives camp on the seashore or banks of rivers in the Solomons, they always put on sentries at night, so as to prevent the crocodiles coming up and striking the sleepers with their tails. This is the usual mode of

attack. "Gaters" and sharks don't agree well together—two of a trade, you know; where one is, the other won't be found. And his sharkship has got little chance against the great saurian, and is at once attacked and often killed and eaten, not being so fast in the water as the other. I once went ashore on one of the islands as a hostage. While the chief slept on board the big bush tribe camped on the sea-shore close to a river all night. Some ten or twelve young fellows marched along the shore and the river-bank to keep the "gaters" back, as they said, while another mob tramped along the edge of the scrub all night to keep the bushmen from surprising the camp. You may be sure I never slept a wink that night, and felt myself again only when the day broke. May I add, Don't go as a hostage, especially in the Solomons!

The beach natives mostly bury their dead in large raised stone piles, to prevent the crocodiles from devouring the bodies. Once in a village, while talking to a chief a crying woman came to complain that the village

crocodile had taken and eaten her boy. The chief gave her small comfort: said she had other children. I improved the occasion by suggesting he should let me shoot the brute. The woman also entreated him. It was no use; he would not hear of it; told me there were plenty of boys—what was a boy? The Solomons people think nothing of human life. Shortly afterwards the chief's favourite pig fell a victim. He then called a public meeting; the priest was consulted, and it was solemnly decided that that particular crocodile was a demon, and not a god, so the whole town turned out and killed him. This was the only case I ever saw or heard of natives killing a crocodile.

After nightfall it is not safe knocking round a Solomon sea-coast village, as "gaters" come right into the town looking for prey—dogs, pigs, children. The story is told yet at Sapuna of three sea captains once card-playing, &c., in one of the huts late. One retired, but came shortly back, and charged the others with putting a log across the doorway to trip

him. This they denied, and said he was drunk and there was no log, so they took the light and went to look; when, lo and behold, they saw a big crocodile close in front of the doorway. It is said the sight sobered the lot. I tell the tale as it was told to me in the village. I see no reason to disbelieve it. Let the reader use salt if he likes; some people are fond of more than a grain of it.

The next place I came in contact with "gaters" was in North Queensland. I could see no difference between them and those of the Solomons; they are much of a size, the largest about sixteen feet long. In Queensland they are less bold, perhaps, due doubtless to their being more liable to attack, as the Australian black rather likes crocodile cold. I have eaten the flesh myself, but its musky odour very nearly turned me up. And the whites shoot at them whenever they get the chance, of course.

I suppose the young folk will be surprised to hear "gaters" make their nests about the same

time the birds do, in sheltered places on banks of rivers, and dark, silent lagoons. I never found the nests close to the salt water.

The eggs, which are about the size of a duck's and the same shape, only a little rougher on the shell, are laid in mounds. From two hundred to three hundred are found in each nest, packed closely together and covered with clay, dead leaves, and forest *débris* layer on layer. The mound or pyramid is about three or four feet high, by about three feet square at the base. The blacks say only one "gater" lays in each nest, and the gentleman is a very faithful spouse, confining himself exclusively to one wife, and also assists in making the nest. The eggs seem to hatch without external heat. I generally found the nest in a shady situation, where the direct rays of the sun could not get at it, and the clay &c., does not seem to heat, for instance, as manure does in the "lowans" mound nests; but then again, the summer heat of Queensland is often 100°, occasionally 120°. I can't say, nor could the blacks tell me, how long a time the eggs take to hatch, but they

stated the fond parents remain in the neighbourhood of the nest until the young are born. The youngsters work out of the egg without assistance, the mother aiding the little ones to get out of their clay birthplace by rooting up the earth, while the father remains handy, so as to eat up his children if he can catch any. What a cannibal! It is odd, but this is also a habit of the great sea turtle (on the South Sea Island cays). Luckily for us men that "gaters" are so fond of each other. Think of three hundred youngsters yearly from one united couple—it is enough to give a fellow the shivers—if they all survived.

During the mating season the males fight fiercely, and bellow like mad bulls; and camped alone close to the mangroves on a wild Queensland coast is enough to make any fellow's nerves quiver as the sun sets, to hear their wild roaring, I can tell you.

Some little time back, I made one of a shooting party to Goose Lagoons, North Queensland. We camped out for three or four days. They were a chain of large and deep

lagoons, and full of duck and magpie geese. One of our party shot on horseback. There was an island in one of the lagoons and he got there, and cooeyed to me to join him. I did so, by wading to the armpits. We chatted a little, leaning against a pile of clay and *débris*. I was a new chum in Queensland then. Presently my friend said in the coolest way in the world—

"I don't think you are very safe here, old fellow."

"Why?" I queried.

"Well, I think you are sitting on a 'gater's' nest, and the blacks say the 'ladye fair' is apt to make fare of those who interfere with her nest, and I believe this lagoon is full of 'gaters.' That is why I ride."

"What in the world did you call me for then?" I said in a rage. "Let me ride behind until we get out."

"No fear," he laughed; "the horse could not carry both. Get out as you got in."

The language then, I am afraid, became unfit for publication.

As I waded back up to my armpits, I thought

every log I knocked against was a mamma "gater," and somehow I missed the next few shots, and gave up wading in deep water afterwards. Before the trip was over we saw some four or five "gaters," and after a day among the geese never found any wounded ones the next morning.

I once got some "gater's" eggs from a gin, and I gave them to a lady. She put them in a box in her bedroom, and forgot all about them. Some ten days afterwards, hearing a grunting in the box, she opened it, and out sprang half a dozen young "gaters" open-mouthed. The lady fled screaming; and now on that plantation the story is told—to new chums—"across the walnuts and the wine" (or is it something stronger?) how half a dozen "gaters" took possession of the lady's bedroom, and cleared out the household. Nothing is said about the size, however. Young "gaters" are about six or seven inches long when born, and it is a puzzle how such big things come out of such a small egg. The blacks are very fond of eating the eggs—the more stale the better for them;

they then have both the eggs and youngster. I tried an egg myself once, but failed dismally. I could not touch it; the smell was enough. I had a young "gater" once for a pet; he was not a success, and if not in a good humour would rush and bite the moment one's finger touched the water, and his teeth were like needles and cut every time. When pleased he would let you scratch and tickle him behind the forearm; he liked this, and would grunt his pleasure. He ate nothing for the four months I had him—but this is a habit among reptiles; snakes often refuse food for six months—and did not grow at all. He died *en route* to Melbourne from cold. I did not put enough mud in his box. The crocodile is one of the few animals that have no fear of man, on land or water; in fact, they seem not to have the sense of fear at all. The moment the little brute of a youngster gets out of the shell it rushes open-mouthed to the attack. Certainly the "gater" makes at once for the water when it sees or smells one if on shore; but if you value your life, don't get between it and its

native element—even with your double express. Once a chum of mine bought a young "gater" about nine feet long, from some Chinese fishermen. He was going home, and meant to take it with him. The celestials had caught it in their nets, and had tied it up: the great jaws were lashed together, the hind feet also, while the forefeet were brought over the back and then tied. My friend locked it in a room for the night, and before leaving loosened its forefeet. Next day we visited it in company. The moment the door was opened it charged us, having only its forefeet free, and rearing itself on its tail somehow threw itself on my chum. He was a stalwart six-footer, but was thrown headlong, and the front of his coat was in tatters when I pulled him clear of the beast from the great claws of the forearms. It took some time to secure the "gater" as before, and my friend took him to England; probably he is in the Zoo now. Crocodiles often strike their prey with the powerful forearm, and "up north" you sometimes see the flanks of cattle scored deep from the effects of the great claws often

one and a half inches long. When I was on the river, three horses had been put overnight in a small stock-yard close to the banks; next morning they were found killed by "gaters." The usual way of destroying "gaters" "up north" is by poison, strychnine or arsenic, put in a dead dog and tied to an overhanging bough, close to the water. This seldom fails. "Gaters" are too cunning to take a baited shark-hook, but a live duck fastened to a flat board with a hook beside it and allowed to splash about sometimes succeeds. I know a black girl who had once been seized by a "gater" and let go again for another. The marks of the brute's teeth were deeply scored on the girl's breast and thigh. The black's local name for "gater" is *Kutchakai*, and when we whites meant to tease this gin we called her so, to her great annoyance. A digger camped one day on our river's bank; about there the bank was steep and almost perpendicular, and some twenty feet in depth. About 8 p.m., as the man read in his tent, a large "gater" took the dog tied at the tent's entrance,

chain and all. Even the close presence of man or the light from the open tent could not deter him. I gave the poison that killed him a few days after. If "gaters" are not hungry, they often bury their food between wind and water, just showing out of the mud or sand, until it is high. This habit enables a fellow to *cache* and get a shot, or lead to the recovery of a body, &c. When bathing, one always gets a black fellow to look out. If by yourself, well—don't bathe—that's all. During the wet season at night crocodiles prowl round from lagoon to lagoon. A ghastly thing happened in my time on the river. A young girl was washing the weekly linen in very shallow water one morning. Her lover was chatting with her; he said "good-bye," and had turned to go, when he heard a slight noise. He swung round, the girl was gone, and was never seen again. It took him a week to shoot the great "gater," and the lassie's boots were found in its interior.

I shot through Java a few years ago. The crocodiles there seem much smaller, slighter, and more timid than those of North Queens-

land or the Solomons. I think they must be a different species. I spent a day with my chum, shooting them close to Piok, the port of Batavia. We got two, or rather he did. I was unlucky. It was most peculiar, but we found them asleep on the banks, in all cases in company with large iguanas. (Do they interbreed, I wonder?) My mate shot the nose off a "gater" with his double express shell. He sank at once. I stood on the bows of the boat as we poked about for him, but lost my balance and fell into the water on top of the brute, and caught him by the tail. He was only about six feet long. We threw him into the boat, thinking him quite dead, but after a time he revived, and took charge, snapping at all like a kangaroo dog. The Malay boatmen promptly jumped overboard, and it took the two of us all we knew to keep the brute off with a broken oar and the tiller. The nose being shot off prevented the brute breathing under water, and he was nearly drowned, but he revived on getting into the air again.

The Malays followed us to the hotel with the

dead "gater," but as we passed the club "Harmoni" some English came out and asked us in. It was then afternoon. Now, the Dutch in Java sleep daily from 2 to 5 p.m., and hold a thin sort of bolster between the arms while in bed, for coolness' sake, they say. This article they call a "wife." Some of the English wags slipped into a sleeping fat Dutchman's room, stole the "wife" away, and put the dead "gater" in its stead. Some time afterwards the name of the club "Harmoni" ceased to be appropriate, as a furious Dutchman shrieked challenges to all the English to fight with sword or pistol. Amid yells of laughter they all accepted. Anyhow, that Dutchie will never forget his "gater" bedfellow, and I hear the story is even yet a standing Batavian joke.

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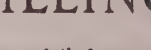
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